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8/9 Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment Annual Journal 2008



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HONOURS & AWARDS 2008

Army Commendation (Bronze):

SGT Peter Day

Soldiers Medallions:

CPL Clancy Fallon

CPL Matthew McCann

LCPL Nicholas Raward



LTCOL Stuart and CPL Hart

PROMOTIONS FOR 2008

PTE to LCPL

8524642 LCPL A.R. Bentley
8253119 LCPL J.W. Burgess
8515423 LCPL S.G. Crooks
8515913 LCPL T. Dineen
8221070 LCPL M.M. Downs
8528177 LCPL B.P. Griffin
8512695 LCPL C. Justice
8516375 LCPL N.L. Keats;
8215596 LCPL C. Knight
8515134 LCPL B. Larsen;
8240075 LCPL L.M. Lignow
8524722 LCPL J.S. Mathesen
8222557 LCPL M.A. Mckelvie
8527039 LCPL D.S. Minter
8253723 LCPL S. Mitchell
8506089 LCPL S.J. Mullens
8492759 LCPL N. Raward
8526861 LCPL C.G. Richardson
8268622 LCPL D.G. Rixon
8495334 LCPL N.P. Seedsman
8488468 LCPL C.L. Shaw
8511586 LCPL A. Stevenson
8293768 LCPL J.L. Taylor
8524701 LCPL M.L. Uglik
8522607 LCPL G.C. Watts

LCPL to CPL

8239646 CPL J.V. Baker
8216534 CPL N.W. Diven
8268701 CPL G.C. Jones
8256081 CPL T.J. Lewis
8524642 CPL A.R. Bentley
8527039 CPL D.S. Minter
8241445 CPL N.P.G. Guy
8245573 CPL W.A. Walker
8239491 CPL E.W. Battese
8524701 CPL M.L. Uglik
8268622 CPL D.G. Rixon
8215596 CPL C. Knight

PTE to CPL

8501913 CPL M.R. McCann

CPL to SGT

8239620 SGT A.B. Bisset
8242201 SGT S. Bury
8233473 SGT J.D. Inglis
8213295 SGT R.G. Ryan
8213431 SGT C.S. Wagstaff

WO2 to WO1

8250231 WO1 R.A. Van Roosmalen

LT to CAPT

8246028 CAPT S.F. Zammit

CAPT to MAJ

8232767 MAJ D.J. Guthrie

FROM THE CO

I am privileged to write the foreword for this 8th/9th Battalion journal, the first since 1997. In the year since the Government announced its decision to re-raise 8/9 RAR as a part of Stage Two of the Enhanced Land Force programme, much has been achieved. We are part of the growth of Army in response to the demands of Australia's commitments around the globe. As the inaugural members of the new Battalion we can be justly proud of our efforts to meet, indeed exceed, the growth milestones required of us and the expectations of our progress. What we have achieved is noteworthy, particularly given the context in which it was achieved, however I am most proud of the way in which we have set about our achievements.

We inherited a very worthy legacy from those who went before us. 8/9 RAR was regarded as a professional, dependable and good humoured Battalion who got about its business without fuss. This reputation was forged through the 8th and 9th Battalions' operational tours in Malaya and South Vietnam and the 8th/9th Battalion's period of home service from linking in 1973 until 1997. We, the current members of the Battalion, strive to fulfil this legacy and to add our own character and experiences to the history. Our rededication to the Colours on the 12th of September this year provided an opportunity to reflect upon the past, be thankful for today and focus our thoughts on what lies ahead.

From very humble beginnings in January, a starting strength of about sixty men, two buildings and no equipment or vehicles, a good deal has been achieved. We are well placed to meet our growth milestones for January 2009 when the Battalion will once again nearly double in size. Importantly, we will raise Bravo Manoeuvre Support and Combat Service Support Companies, complete the Battalion Headquarters and motorise Alpha Company. Building on our successes this year, we will continue to train our own soldiers through Initial Employment Training courses and to grow and develop our own junior NCO's.



There have been many achievements and highlights during the year, including the success of our Duke of Gloucester Cup team, the conduct of a range of individual and collective training activities – the IET courses, range weeks, Battalion live fire exercise and the CTC battle group warfighter exercise.

In 2009 we face the challenge of maintaining an accelerated rate of growth while preparing for operations, much the same challenge faced by 8 RAR and 9 RAR in the late sixties. This will require us to contribute both as individuals and as teams as we achieve and maintain readiness and develop our capacity to fight, operate and adapt as part of combined arms teams in the contemporary environment.

Simon Stuart
December 2008

FROM THE RSM

Firstly let me say how privileged I am to be the first RSM since the 8th/9th Battalion was removed from the Order of Battle (ORBAT) in 1997, and then re-raised in Oct 2007.

We commenced the re-raised Battalion with around 64 all ranks, now, as the year 2008 comes to a close we find that our establishment has been raised to around 270 all ranks in less than a year, which is no mean feat.

Now as our first year comes to a close we can reflect on the enormous challenges that have been placed in front of us and yes, we have met and I believe exceed those challenges due to the quality of Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and the Soldiers themselves who are apart of this very proud and un-assuming Battalion. In saying that we now have the ability yet limited to have a Motorised Rifle Company, A light Infantry Company the beginnings of both Support and Administration Companies and a near fully manned Battalion Headquarters.

When the CO and I travel around the area seeing the soldiers of the battalion conducting training and their attitudes, responses for us to see leave us with no doubt that the reputation that the soldiers passed had, are, firmly entrenched in these new soldiers, and as we travel outside the Battalion, we are still receiving comments on the fine work that the Battalion is doing.

I know that there are quite a few highlights for the Battalion to reflect on but for me there are two, the first being the Duke of Gloucester Cup, where our soldiers performed to such a high standard that they nearly won it. Finishing equal second behind the Sixth Battalion, not only let the rest of the RAR know that we were back but was a good out come for the Brigade. The second would be our Regimental week, with little preparation to receive our Regimental Colours back; this was to me the defining moment that the Eighth/Ninth Battalion was back and here to stay.

With only a few more weeks left in the year and still a few more activities to support, the moving in to our Headquarters and taking back the Ram's Retreat, so keep up the good work, Christmas will allow us all to have a break and come back in 2009 refreshed and ready to step up further on the plate, the challenges will be waiting and not any easier, so meet them head on.

To you all and your families have a safe and enjoyable break; I'm looking forward to the challenges of 2009 so should you.

DACC TASK 17 - 19 NOV 08

On Sunday 16 Nov 08, Brisbane experienced a particularly violent storm that left large areas without power and caused a significant amount of damage to the suburbs of Keperra and The Gap.

As A Coy arrived for work on Monday the 17 Nov 08, some off hand comments were made that we may be going out to help with a clean up task. As the day wore on, this call never came and by lunch time we all thought we were in the clear.

Little did we know that the wheels were well and truly in motion. The OC and 2IC attended orders at 1800h. As usual, the Coy was the largest organisation at the table and other units were a little surprised that an organisation with 188 men (6 platoons) was still being called a company. Our orders were to deploy in the morning and to assist with the clean-up of the storm damage. It was suggested that we would not need the whole company but the OC was disinclined to acquiesce to that request and warned out everybody to deploy at 0600h on Tuesday morning.

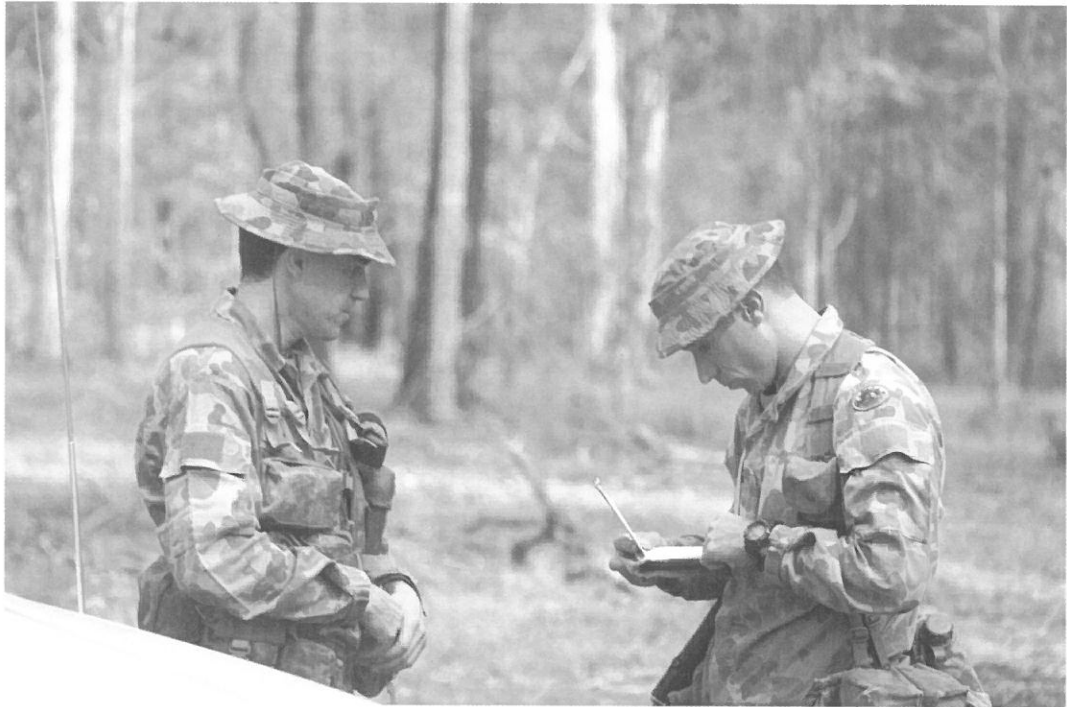
Our tasks were broad. A troop from 2/14 Light Horse Regiment and a transport section of nine drivers and Hiaces from 7 Combat Service Support Battalion was attached. 4 Platoon and the troop from 2/14 LHR had vehicles attached and were sent out to install tarpaulins on damaged roofs while 1, 2, 5 and 6 Platoons were sent to separate areas of operation to clear roads, paths, parks and private property.

CHQ established itself in a park and coordinated the council workers and subcontractors that were sent to carry the debris away in trucks of all shapes and sizes.

A Company worked hard for two long days before the areas were sufficiently clear to hand back to the council to complete the task. Some soldiers were lucky enough to be given some gifts (beers) while others helped clear people's backyards and did not even get a thankyou.



RSM-WO1 Lampard



LTCOL Stuart and MAJ Pennisi

CHARITY

On 20 May 08, the Battalion commenced an affiliation with the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation with the view to establishing an enduring relationship with the Royal Children's Hospital 'Working Wonders for Sick Kids' initiative.

The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation is the catalyst for the initiative and the principal source of revenue and volunteer support to a hospital that provides not only medical services but an extensive range of support mechanisms to Queensland families in times of need.

8/9 RAR's mission for support to the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation is to engage with and contribute to the community, of which we are a part. The many young families that comprise the Battalion rely on the superb services and facilities within the Royal Children's

Hospital and we want to give something back to our community. We will give our time, money and whatever effort available to achieving our mission, and we will have the benefit of seeing this contribution go to the kids of Queensland.

Since the establishment of the relationship, members of the Battalion have visited the hospital on a number of occasions and been moved to see both kids and their families fight battles that would test any soldier. We will continue to learn lessons from these 'little warriors' and look forward to doing what we can to fight with them.



8/9 RAR Helping the Royal Children's Hospital

8/9 RAR OPS CELL 2008

The year started out like any other year.....ooops wait a minute wrong story...sorry.

It actually started quite slow as the unit was still in its rebuilding phase, ops was relaxed and easy going until late Feb when the OPSO swaggered in with a huge bomb set to explode on the happy little office.

The OPSO informed his happy relaxed workers that they had to work from 7am to 4am for at least a week to establish the TARPs for the next five years, otherwise the shit would hit the fan and the bomb would go off. The work on the tarp went relatively smoothly until the hallucinations started (elephants in pick tutu's = Bad JUJU) and everyone found themselves going over the same work until everything was correct.

When the task was complete OPS settled back into the mundane tasks of daily routine, but the bomb was still ticking. It turns out that THALES delivered the wrong box and had delivered pink panties meant for 7 Brigade by mistake. After the OPSCLK finished trying on all the panties so that he could take the ones that fit, they were forwarded to the correct address.

The OPS cell again settled back into the day to day activities of running the battalion and it became quite evident that the OPS SGT enjoyed dealing with ACMS as he punched and swore at his computer. The OPSWO took great pleasure in watching the OPS SGT do this, while he was swearing at the 4000 changes to courses he had to deal with each day.

After some time we managed to help the OPS CLK escape from the heavily guarded pit of despair (orderly room) and he is now in hiding, rarely seen in uniform let

alone at all. The OPS CLK has become very proficient at hand passing any mundane tasks to his fellow animal, the Battalion runner. Once the runner has completed that task for him he reappears with the finished work all puffed up and ready for the next task, knowing that a simple hand pass will see him relieved of this as well.

Apart from being quite surprised at how well things have run with OPS being so understaffed, we are always looking for ways to escape the daily grind of the OPS Office. The most recent opportunity was when the OPSO went on holiday with most of the rest of the Battalion to sunny North Queensland (Ex SWIFT EAGLE). He has been back 5 minutes and is already looking for another chance to get away (SIO-S Cse, sailing cse). All the while the ever responsible and diligent OPSWO and OPS SGT sit faithfully at their desks and computers ensuring the smooth running of the Battalion; at times contemplating how the work load reduces whenever the OPSO disappears on one of his vacations.

The OPS SGT did manage to escape the Ops cell to sunny Singleton and Puckapunyal to complete his range qualifications and PMV suite of courses. This must have been quite scary for the Tasmanian - having to drive the big truck - which we noticed on his return had done nothing to improve his driving skill. He now thinks he can run over anything and needs two lanes to reverse his car from his parking bay.

Anyway, there is nothing more that rates a mention; only that the hard workers of the OPS Cell are looking forward to bidding farewell to the OPSO (who has another year) and handing over to the new staff coming in. (Note from OPSO - Pete, you're staying too mate!)



SGT Day

BHQ ORDERLY ROOM

It has been quite a year in the Battalion Orderly Room with staff coming and going, building a new battalion, the day to day admin of an infantry battalion and being crowned supreme champions of 8/9 RAR Billy cart racing.

January 7 2008 will be forever embedded in my mind because that was my first day at 8/9 RAR. There were five of us at that point; MAJ Falk, MAJ Nicoll, WO2 Dunn, CPL Kelleher and myself. I was set mundane tasks such as setting up the orderly room with two desks and one computer, setting up the stationary cupboard with only one box of pens and my personal favourite, painting the car park for Battalion HQ. Little did I know that a battalion of five would gather momentum and become a strength of 290 by the end of the year and would become a force to be reckoned with and the orderly room would play a major part of that success.

When members started marching in to the unit, the ORS arrived (SGT Lear), who took on most of the responsibilities of the orderly room and myself who was responsible for the day to day running of the orderly room. And as far as the staff of the orderly room goes, that was it. It was quite a challenge for a digger and a newly promoted sergeant to handle the influx of soldiers on a day to day basis. For the next few months there were at least twenty soldiers marching in each week which caused some late nights and many stressed out days. Throughout this entire time WO2 Dunn was trying to get more staff to cope with the work load but without success. Then in March our prayers were answered with the arrival of CPL Walters and then again in May with the arrival of PTE Scholz, who was fresh out of IET's. The orderly room was finally growing.

One fateful morning it all changed as a signal was brought to my attention stating that SGT Lear had an

ongoing medical condition which would no longer permit him to work. On top of that the then Chief Clerk was organising his discharge and was leaving in a few weeks and the orderly room went into chaos. Due to there being no structured hierarchy it spun out of control quite quickly and even the simplest of tasks became a big problem. After a few months of struggling every day and some real thoughts of AWOL a light finally presented itself at the end of the tunnel. And that light came in the form of WO2 Inglis and WO2 Williams. With two seasoned and experienced warrant officers at the helm, the orderly room finally got the structure that it needed. Each clerk was given a specific job rather than everyone doing bits of everything. I was given the ORS position, PTE Scholz was given the responsibilities of movements (which he loves) and CPL Walters was given the day to day responsibilities of an orderly room CPL. It wasn't perfect, but it was a step in the right direction.

Having this manning for two months got a lot of things done, a lot of procedures put in place and we now had the opportunity of working as clerks rather than being in a panicking state all day. In September SGT Sporn came to 8/9 RAR and was welcomed into the orderly room. We finally had a sergeant and the orderly room was getting more and more structured as the year wore on. And finally we got another digger, PTE Ross, which makes the orderly room full and company clerks can now be implemented.

Having been at 8/9 RAR from the beginning of the year I have had the pleasure and pain of working with a wide range of people and been put into a wide spectrum of situations I would not have been in at any other unit. It has been a challenging and rewarding year and can only get better, hopefully. My first year at 8/9 RAR will not be forgotten any time soon.



A TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL A.L. "ALBY" MORRISON AO DSO MBE,

THE "FATHER" OF 9 RAR

Not all of us leave footprints. Not all of us leave a legacy.

Not so Alan Lindsay Morrison. "Alby", as he was affectionately known, was the Commanding Officer of a battalion in the days when we sought permission of our CO to get married – it was an era where the CO was the father figure of a battalion, a title that Alby wore with ease and wore well.

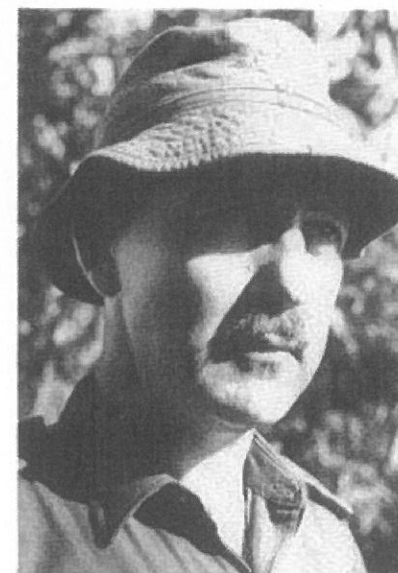
His was a long journey from the 15 August, 1927, in Sydney to the completion of his journey on the 9 May, 2008, in Canberra. Within that time Alby had graduated from Duntroon, in 1947, and in 1948 experienced his first overseas trip to Japan as a member of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force.

In 1951 he was posted to Korea with 66 Battalion, later to become 2 RAR and returned there in 1952 as a member of the 28 Commonwealth Brigade. It was some time during this period that he met and married his wife and soul mate, Margaret.

Alby was to experience life in a battalion with 1 RAR before he joined us in 1967 as the first CO of 9 RAR and our founding father.

Alby and Margaret now have a son and daughter and I believe 5 grandchildren and have made their home, since retirement, in Canberra.

It would remiss of me not to mention that Alby, amongst other things, also served as the Honorary Colonel Commandant of the Regiment, was a past national president of the Royal Australian Regiment Association and it was he that established the Royal Australian Regiment Foundation of which he was the Inaugural Chairman.

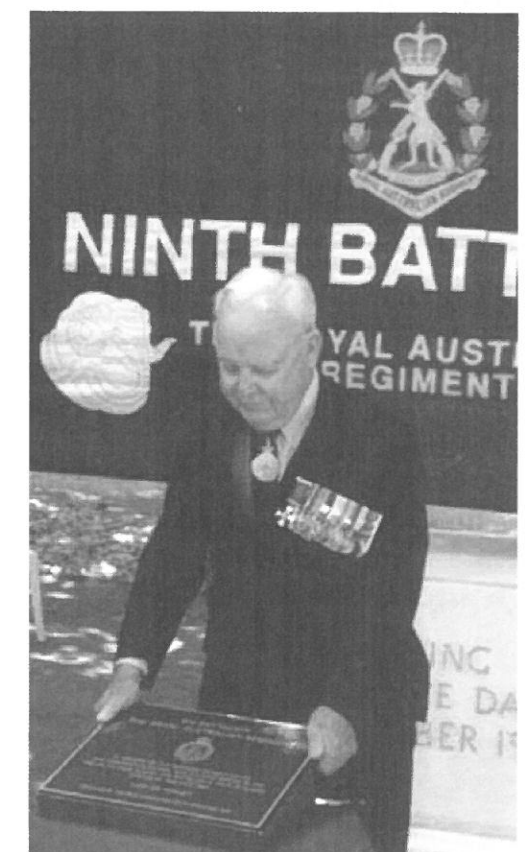
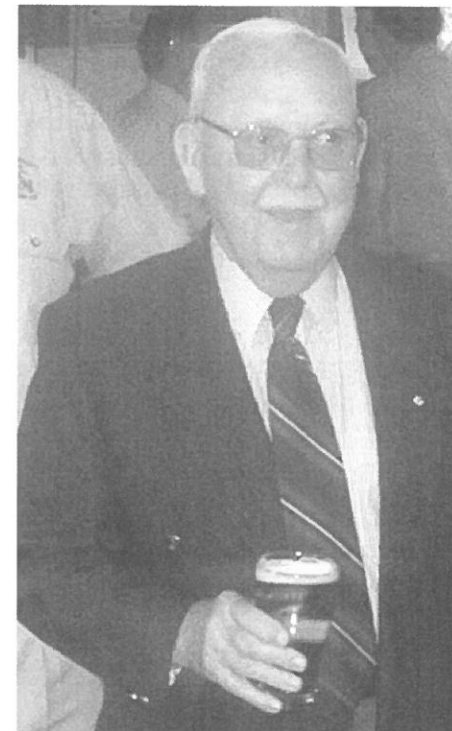


Lt Col A.L. Morrison.

In between all his other interests he never lost interest in us. This is the man who was always interested to know who was doing well, who needed a hand. Yes, a father figure and a man of deep compassion. His mortal remains will leave us, but his legacy will live on. Whenever the name of Alby Morrison is mentioned it will be with great pride and respect. Long will we remember the cheeky grin and the happy smile.

To Margaret and the family you have our deepest respect for the life of a man well lived.

*Warren Featherby
OAM, President, 9
RAR (SA), on behalf
of the 9 RAR Family.*



SWIFT EAGLE 2008

It was with a little trepidation that the Battalion boarded the C-130 for the flight to Townsville to take part in Exercise Swift Eagle 2008. The Exercise was a Combat Training Centre (CTC) run activity and was designed to test the operational effectiveness of 'Blue Force' (read 'Good Guys'), 2 RAR Battle Group, against the 'Opposition Force' (read underdog 'Bad Guys'), 8/9 RAR Battle Group.

The exercise would be the first time that the Battalion had deployed as an effective fighting force since its removal from the ORBAT in 1997. Due to the heavy burden of training courses being conducted, all of the JNCOs and SGTs could not come on the exercise. Many soldiers had to stand up and fill in positions well above their relative level of experience, but, not above their level of ability as it would turn out.

It was from this base that the Battalion Group came together in Townsville on 15 Oct 2008. Under command of 8/9 RAR was a Troop from 16 Air Defence Regiment, a Battery of 105mm guns from 16 Field Regiment Royal New Zealand Artillery, elements of 7 CSST, a Troop of ASLAVs from B Squadron 2/14 Light Horse Regiment, a Troop of Combat Engineers from 3 CER and elements from CTC, 2 Cavalry Regiment and 20 STA.

This disparate group had been cobbled together and orders were issued by the CO. The exercise was to be split into two distinct phases. The first phase was the defence of several population centres with a delaying force deployed forward and the second phase was the defence of Spear Chukka Village (Line Creek Junction) from an imminent attack.

The odds were stacked against us. 2 RAR had two Infantry combat teams, a Squadron of ASLAVs, a Regiment of 105mm guns, Squadrons of attack and troop lift helicopters, FA-18s, PC-3s and an exceptional array of intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition assets. The normal ratio of three to one had been well and truly exceeded!



The first mission went well. A Coy fought a valiant action at Star Diamond Mine but could not resist the weight of numbers arrayed against them and Combat Team Bravo did a considerable amount of work hardening Spear Chukka Village. The most significant action of the phase was conducted by Combat Team Charlie. They were given the mission of remaining undetected near the enemy's supply and HQ area before conducting an attack that would dislocate the re-supply of deployed elements. This attack managed to significantly hinder the re-supply capability of the enemy and was termed a great success.

Phase two was a little more straight-forward. The Battle Group concentrated in Spear Chukka Village and prepared the area for the attack we knew was coming. An issue with the Bushmaster vehicles resulted in all of them being grounded and 2 RAR were forced to walk the 15kms or so to their objective. The attack came and we, once again, gave a good fight but the weight of numbers pipped us at the post.

The result of the exercise was a resounding success for the Battalion. From a relatively weak starting point, we came together and achieved an effect that was disproportionate to our numbers, resources and assets. This was no surprise to the members of the Battalion, it was simply a continuation of the work and approach we had taken all year. It was however a surprise to many of the people that supported or participated in the exercise, many of which had low expectations of us. They now know the Ram is Back!

WO2 Vallely, MAJ Pennisi and LT Keeling

ALPHA COMPANY 2008

From humble beginnings, Alpha Company has grown and grown into an organisation that is, unofficially, the biggest infantry company in the Army.

The start of 2008 was the real beginning for the company. MAJ Steve Pennisi and WO2 Darren Vallely constituted the CHQ and had a mere handful of soldiers under command. Providing a capable, if somewhat absent, 1 PL HQ, LT Gareth Rochester and SGT Damir Cubela. SGT Cubela was lucky enough to earn an exchange to the British Army on Exercise Long Look and spent the lion's share of the first half of the year in the UK.

The pattern for the year was set early with soldiers being trickle fed into the Company as they marched into the Battalion. No other company was to be raised in 2008 so all of the Battalion's soldiers would reside in A Coy until Bravo and Support Coy were raised in 2009. As well as the trickle feed of soldiers, the other side of the pattern for A Company was also set early with most of the rank being deployed to act as Observer Trainers for the Mission Rehearsal Exercise of the Reconstruction Task Force that was to deploy to Afghanistan.

This high workload for supporting tasks did not leave much power in the tank but Exercise Yellow Steps; a Section and Platoon level field training activity was run in February.

As the trickle of soldiers fed into A Company, new Platoons were raised. 2 Platoon was stood up in April with LT Josh Keeling in command and SGT Dave Klieid doing all of the actual work. 3 Platoon and 4 Platoon were then established with LT Jean-Michel (John) L'Aimable, SGT Luke Butler, LT Maxim King and SGT Cameron Wagstaff filling the respective positions.

The numbers in A Company were now looking quite healthy on paper. As early experienced suggested, a significant proportion of A Company, at any one time, would be deployed on operations or support tasks. This was true for the company 2IC, CAPT Andrew Creasy, who arrived in May and was then rarely seen until the beast that was support tasks had been sated.

In June, A Company deployed on the Battalion Live Fire Exercise at Shoalwater Bay Training Area. This exercise achieved some excellent outcomes with many soldiers qualified on the 84mm MDFSW and MAG 58 Machine Gun. After some further training, live fire section attacks were also conducted.

The trickle feed continued with 5 Platoon, LT Luke Holloway and SGT Andrew Bisset, being raised in August. Alpha Company now was one of the biggest sub-units in the Army and it was still growing.

5 Platoon was there just in time to join the company at Greenbank Training Area for a week of range shooting in July. Good results were achieved by the shooters and future Snipers were identified. Further field training was conducted in August in conjunction with 1 Field Regiment. A Coy provided the Infantry component for a Danger Close Fire Mission at Shoalwater Bay Training Area. Exercise Tigers Charge was made all the more enjoyable with the inclusion of a Company assault onto a Hesco hardened position after the position had been reduced with 105mm, 84mm, 66mm and 40mm fire.

6 Platoon was the last Platoon to be raised and is, at the time of writing this article, embryonic in form. LT Ashley Zimmerlie is the sole command element and will look to build the platoon in 2009.

Exercise Swift Eagle 2008, conducted in late October, was the culminating activity for the company. Three platoons deployed on this exercise and constituted the bulk of the enemy force. Whilst the Blue Force always has to win on the day, the company gave a good account of itself and established a sound reputation.

As we look to 2009, it is with a little sadness. The now mighty Alpha Company, nearly 200 men strong, will be split to the four winds so Bravo and Support Companies can be raised. Alpha Company will be left as a shell of its former glory though still at a respectable posted strength. A tumultuous year has been had but the rebirth of any unit is always interesting. The Officers and Soldiers will look back on the year with fond memories.



7 BDE RSM with members of A COY-OBS Course

1 PLATOON

In the latter part of Nov 07, a small group of men from 6 RAR were notified of their posting to 8/9 RAR with effect 21 Jan 08. As one of 'the chosen', I was desperately trying to gather as much information on the where, when and how for the beginning of the re-raised battalion in the new year. The first day of 8/9 was an interesting one, no computers. A platoon commander's nightmare! All of 1 Platoon were present and ready for an interesting year ahead. The scrounging ability of the platoon was put to the test in the first few weeks, trying to establish "the Cave" below BHQ.

The year started off at a reasonable pace. With 30 soldiers in the Battalion, the prospect for each soldier spending prolonged period on courses was pretty good. The size of the platoon grew quickly in the following months with 1 Platoon growing to approx 60 diggers by late March.

It wasn't long before I had the great pleasure of informing ten of the diggers that they were nominated for Sub 1 for CPL. This news was met with mixed responses, some of which are unprintable! On completion of this course, I lost a number of characters, who were posted to other platoons on promotion to Lance Corporal.

Unfortunately for me, I was down a PL SGT as SGT Cubela was seconded to Her Majesty's forces for Ex LONG LOOK. The exchange SGT, Neil Young, landed in Brisbane, pale and suffering with the intense heat! (20 Degrees Celsius). SGT Young is a member of 4 Rifles, formerly known as the Royal Green Jackets a Regiment with an excellent reputation within the British Army. SGT Young was quickly adopted into the platoon, and on ANZAC Day was introduced to Bundy Rum and suffered greatly from the experience. The boys took SGT Young under their wing and made sure that he was always well hydrated whilst at the licensed establishments around Brisbane.

Due to the number of courses being run, it has been difficult to conduct training as a platoon with 3 sections. Fortunately we have a lot of junior soldiers with good leadership potential, giving some of them the opportunity to step up and lead their peers. The LFX at Wide Bay was a prime example of this, with excellent leadership displayed by some junior soldiers within the Battalion.

Overall, this year has been busy, yet a thoroughly enjoyable one. It has been a pleasure working the men of 1 Platoon and look forward to observing their work in the new year

BATTALION LIVE FIRE EXERCISE

The 8/9 RAR Battalion LFX was conducted during the period 17-26 June 2008 at Wide Bay Training Area. The LFX consisted of LF2 zeroing of all section weapons, MAG 58 and 84mm MDFSW weapon qualification practices as well as section attacks and platoon ambushing live firing. Alpha Company also used this time to conduct IMTs for the sections and platoon and for a large majority of the soldiers and officers was to be the first time working together.

BHQ for the first three days would be located at Camp Kerr Scale A so as to shake out the CP prior to deploying into the field, at was their story and they stuck to it like glue. LT Solomon (RSO) reinforced to the MAJ Nicoll (OPSO) that he had everything under control and that communications would be flawless. CHQ Alpha Company positioned itself on the 43 spot height of Training Area 11. This location was central to the blank firing training areas as well as the section attack stand. The OIC's (CAPT Schmidt and LT Zammit) with the help from the BTT and other members of the battalion positioned themselves in a hide somewhere in Training Area 13, this was no doubt CAPT Schmidt's decision (out of sight out of mind or he who is not seen can not be dirked his the motto that he enforces to all snipers).

With the weapon qualifications being conducted over a three day period this CAPT Creasy (OIC) was given the enviable task of qualifying approximately 60 soldiers. By the end of the three day CAPT Creasy was heard muttering "What was I thinking when I decided to return to Australia". Whilst the weapon qualifications were on this gave the remainder of the soldiers who were

already qualified to conduct IMT's as well as the safety staff to fine tune the live fire stands.

Prior to the commencement of the live fire BHQ conducted a step-up (I think); I was told it was a make it up as we go, kind of a step-up. Anyway; with BHQ now in location and MAJ Nicoll (DOP) rubbing his hand to finally have his LFX running.....he was now in all his glory.

For the platoon commanders LT Rochester, LT L'Aimable and LT Keeling they would each lead their platoons into the live fire ambushes having little more than just one week of cohesion. 1 Platoon would be first to rotate through the ambush, and the overall result was good. During this time the sections would rotate through the live section attack and it would be 2 Platoon that would go first. For many of the sections it would be diggers who would lead them on the live fire attacks with good results.

By the end of the live fire many debrief points would be raised for the platoon commander to take away and incorporate into their respective training programs. For CPL S. Jones he would earn a massive \$10,500 on DEMO tasks destroying blinds all over Wide Bay.

Within six months 8/9 RAR was able to achieve live fire section attacks and live fire platoon ambushing with MAG 58 & 84mm weapon qualifications.



8/9 RAR COLOUR REDEDICATION PARADE

On of the final acts of re-establishing a Unit of the RAR, and to bring it back in line with other battalions of the RAR is to have ownership of its Colours, which happened to 8/9 RAR on the 12th September 2008.

With only two days to conduct rehearsals and conduct the parade was put together with good success. It was conducted on Duncan Oval and using the rear of the Australian Army Band – Brisbane's (AAB-B) facilities which was converted into a Chapel set the scene for a parade that was simple and symbolic for the re-establishing the soldiers of the Battalion to their Queens and Regimental Colours.

Once the church parade was completed the Battalion formed up ready to march the colours on parade and have the Battalion with pipes and band support marched

up to The Rams Retreat to the tune of "Black Bear" and the "oi" where appropriate. The Colours now in the Care of the Battalion were secured and the soldier we fallen out and sent off to get ready for the Battalion Ball at the Mercure Inn.

The rededication parade was well represented from all associations that are linked to 8/9 RAR, they were, the Royal Australian Regiment Association (QLD Branch) represented by LTCOL E. Chitham, MC, OAM (RETD), the 8th Battalion Association, Mr Klaus Scheuermann, National President, 9th Battalion Association Mr Barry Stalder President (QLD Branch) and the 8th/9th Battalion Association Mr Iain Cruickshank National President.



SGT Wagstaff

2 PLATOON – "WILD ROVERS"

Since its return to the ORBAT 8/9 RAR has been in full swing in order to reach its benchmarks to provide a motorised capability to the Army. Alpha Company and in particular 2 Platoon has been involved in much of this, resulting in a very busy time for all.

In the platoons first six months of life, it has seen live fire ambushes and section attacks, along with a chance to develop its dismounted TTPs. It has been given the opportunity to provide a protected lift asset to the company with PMVs, and supported C SQN 2/14 LHR in a Cavalry Combat Team exercise. Along with this, individuals in the platoon have been busy supporting Ex Suman Warrior in New Zealand and gaining qualifications such as JLC, SIOS, Recon Basic, DFSW, Signals and even produced a Sniper. Unfortunately (for the platoon) this will no doubt mean losing some of our members to their respective platoons in Support Company.

Most recently the Platoon was tasked with the responsibility to mount in PMVs to support 2/14 LHR on their Squadron level activity, Ex Mafeking. After the lift, via C-17, (where 2PL was the first PMV mounted call sign to be lifted in C-17s,) the platoon was ready to begin its first mounted exercise for 8/9 RAR. Integrated into Combat Team Senator, 2PL soon found itself immersed in all the

challenges of motorised combat, and was able to provide effective support to the combined arms team.

At the conclusion of Ex Mafeking, 2PL returned to familiar surroundings with ACOY for Ex Swift Eagle 08. After a few weeks of field training under its belt, there was little time for the platoon to rest before deploying back to High Range, where 2PL again was able to refine its mounted TTPs. Unfortunately a maintenance issue resulted in the PMVs grounded after only a week, so the platoon continued the exercise as a dismounted force, taking part in the (now infamous) Defence of Star Diamond Mine, and Spearchuckka Village.

All in all it has been a very busy and rewarding time for 2PL. As the platoon winds down for the Christmas break, we welcome new members to the platoon, and look forward to another busy year for Alpha Company and 8/9 RAR.



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3 PLATOON

3PL was raised in June 08 and it started with a bang, quite literally. It started with a Coy LFX at Wide Bay. What a better way to get to know your new work mates then with live rounds going down range. The exercise consisted of section attacks, PL ambushes and the guys becoming qualified on the Mag 58 and 84mm. Lt L'Aimable and acting SGT, CPL Baker set the bar high and the lads responded accordingly by achieving a good standard of work

July brought a chance to really start bonds within the PL with an R.T.P. During this period the standards that were expected of PL members within the barracks was established. It was during this time that a large amount of PL members were given their respective Support Course's that were to be conducted during the year.

The battalion was tasked to EX 'Tigers Charge' with 1st Field Regiment in August. This involved a Danger Close Mission being fired. Blokes who had been in the Regiment for less than 2 months found themselves only a few hundred meters from 105's exploding near their position. A joint attack with 2 CER, showed that the boys were unfazed. The lads conducted an attack on a fortified position, after the engineers breeched the position, to the high standards 3PL had now set itself.

September high lighted the rapid growth of the battalion when the PL had three quarters of the boys away on either D.F.S.W, P.M.V and S.C.C.C courses. All members completed their respective courses with no great difficulty and set themselves up with a ticket to Support Company.

A COY had 'OP SWIFT EAGLE' conducted at High Range in Townsville, during October. And due to course's still being run concurrently, blokes with little experience had no choice but to step up in to command roles. CPL's equipped young diggers with as much information as possible before they set and tackled 2 RAR as an enemy party. The lads were no easy push over for the battle hardened 2 RAR and gave them no end of trouble over the EX. The highlight and lowlight for the lads was the modes of transport to and from the EX. The lads took a Hercules on the way up and H.M.A.S Menura on the way home.

November was a slower period for most of the PL. Except those on the S.I.OS course, Lt L'Aimable included. But 3PL didn't let the impending Christmas brake slow it down. Basic soldiering skills were still kept at a high standard with constant training. 3PL along with the rest of the battalion were tasked to help with the storm relief efforts around Brisbane, particularly The Gap, which was hit the hardest.

December ushered in the Christmas break which all members of 3PL looked forward to after a hectic 6 months in which all the lads had worked professionally thru. It hadn't been a period in which the PL had had much stability due to course's and bush trips but due to the standards set early on 3PL showed it's diligence, ability to adapt and goog humour to make '08 an extremely productive year for all included.



LT L'Aimable

60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT

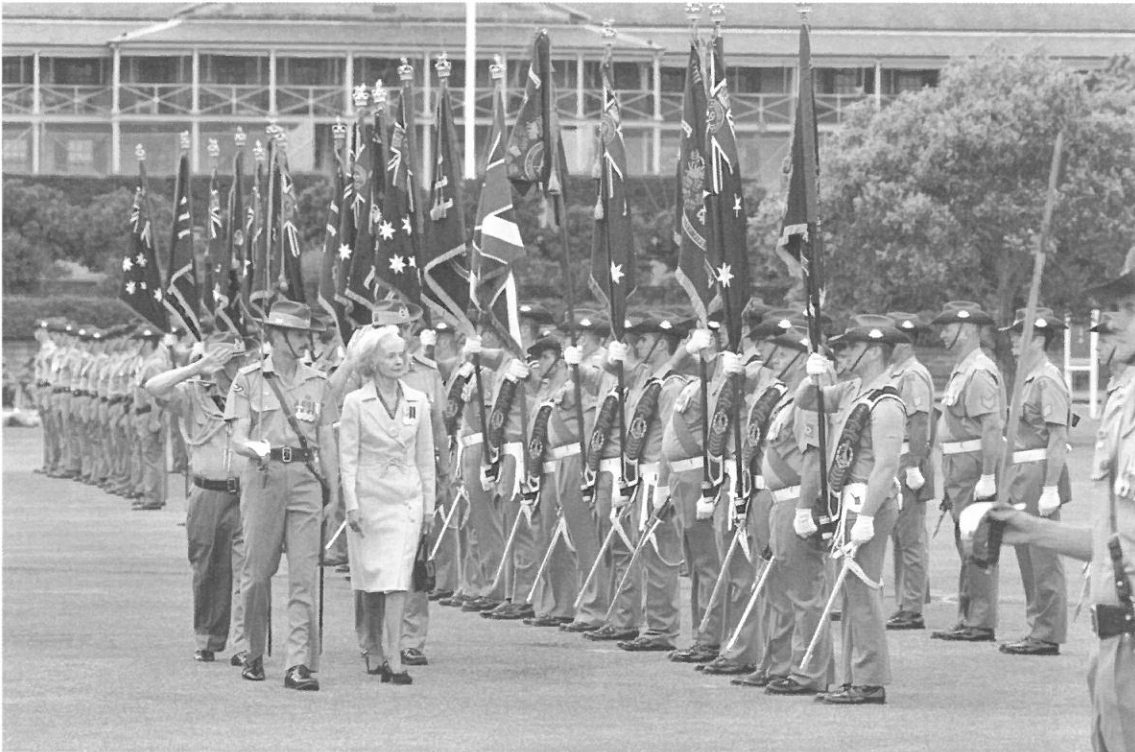
23RD NOVEMBER 2008, Eight Battalions, of The Royal Australian Regiment were on parade to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Royal Australian Regiment at Victoria Barracks Sydney.

The Parade itself was complemented with an Honour Guard from the 3rd Battalion. Official Guests were Her Excellency the Governor General of Australia, Ms Quentin Bryce, AC, The Chief of Army Lieutenant General K.J. Gillespie, AO, DSO, CSM and the Colonel Commandant of the Royal Australian Regiment, Major General B. W. Howard, AO, MC, ESM (RETD) just to name a few.

The Parade itself was conducted on a cool, windy and at times overcast day in Sydney with the occasional light shower, a highlight with the windy conditions was to see the colours in full flight when the performed the Royal Salute.

The Parade was well organized and presented to the Governor General and guests of the 60th Anniversary of the Royal Australian Regiment Parade. The dress and bearing of the soldiers on parade with the Colours of the Regiment made us all feel very proud, as this was reflected by a few comments from the guest.

The attendance was well attended with many ex serving Officers and soldiers of the Regiment. After the parade we all rallied around a large marquee which housed refreshments and gave us all the opportunity to socialize with both the Royal Guard and ex serving soldiers and to hear some of there stories is left to be told on another day.



DOG CUP 2008

To say that we hit prep training hard is an overstatement. The team took a different approach to training for the DOG Cup. I guess we sort of just cruised into it, because at the end of the day, that is the sort attitude the team had. Very relaxed, good morale and the aim we had was to represent the Battalion in it's first year back and get all the lads over the finish line.

Training started once CPL Hart came back from Sub2 for SGT which was only two weeks before the comp itself. The hardest part about DOG Cup was getting a team together. The battalion had the numbers, but with courses taking a big chunk, the team was ever changing. The 2IC position was hard to fill, so in the end Jason Matheson stepped up, and did the job with little to no difficulty. The rest of the team came from all over the battalion and it was noted that every man was a volunteer.

Training was a little bit of everything. The team deployed with the Coy to Greenbank where we conducted some improvised live fire shoots as well as some pack marching. While in loc for that week the team covered its conventional role tactics. After Greenbank we did some urban training up at Watson's oval and that was pretty much it. We got our equipment courtesy of the elderly gentlemen in the Q-Store who did an outstanding job in getting the required gear for us at such short notice.

The drive down to Sunny Singhole was a hoot and everyone felt quite comfortable going into the comp. No expectations. When we arrived it was no surprise that no-one knew what was going on. We got settled in and then hit the Impy for a country and couple of beers before we started in a couple of days. The first stand up was the Obs cse which the team won. Credit can be given to the Wallabies for beating the All Blacks the night before. Harty was in a bad mood and pushed the team that little bit harder.

Throughout the comp there were live fire shooting, blank fire activities and a lot of stomping between stands. What stuck out for us the most was the praise we were getting from all parties concerned? The consensus was that every time our team rocked up to a stand, we always had a smile on our faces. Morale was high. Actually keeping the lads morale up was easy. Take big Clayden for example; as long as he had something to eat, the big fella was always happy.



All the lads had a very good attitude, little Cody who could take on the biggest lads & would never stop laughing. Credit goes out to him for carrying the F89. Richo who was the other gunner also performed equally well and doesn't know how to stop smiling. It's noted Moffet will keep going, but loves to sing chick songs at Karaoke. And Justice or better known as Forest can come up with some very entertaining questions. All we'll say about Thorson is "there's always one" and he did it in style. So much style, he would wear his favourite cardigan with buttons. Aussie (PTE Austin) was our reserve, but most definitely part of the team. He was a big help in getting extra food out to us for Claydo.

We cannot forget our Team leader on exchange from across the other side of the world, SGT Neil Young. He had played a big part in the teams overall readiness and was good for the lad's morale. I think it had something to do with his accent. And let's not forget he hates spiders, his reaction always got a laugh.

When we got to the finish line the men's attitude was the same as it had been throughout the whole comp. But nonetheless it was still a great feeling to be finished. The CO and RSM were there to greet us at the end and a couple of the lads had commented how they've never seen the RSM smile so much. No-one knew the results but everyone was happy with the 8/9 RAR team performance.

The team definitely went in there as prepared as we could be with the time we had. We were the underdogs and I don't think anyone expected us to do as well as we did. Results were in and we came equal second with 2RAR who had been training for months. There was only a 50 point difference between us and 6RAR, the winners who were equally training for several months.

4 PLATOON

As for the remainder of the Battalion, 4 Platoon has had a very turbulent and strenuous year. 4 Platoon was formed at the conclusion of the first 8/9 RAR IET course and has since grown, and matured into the fit fighting force it is today.

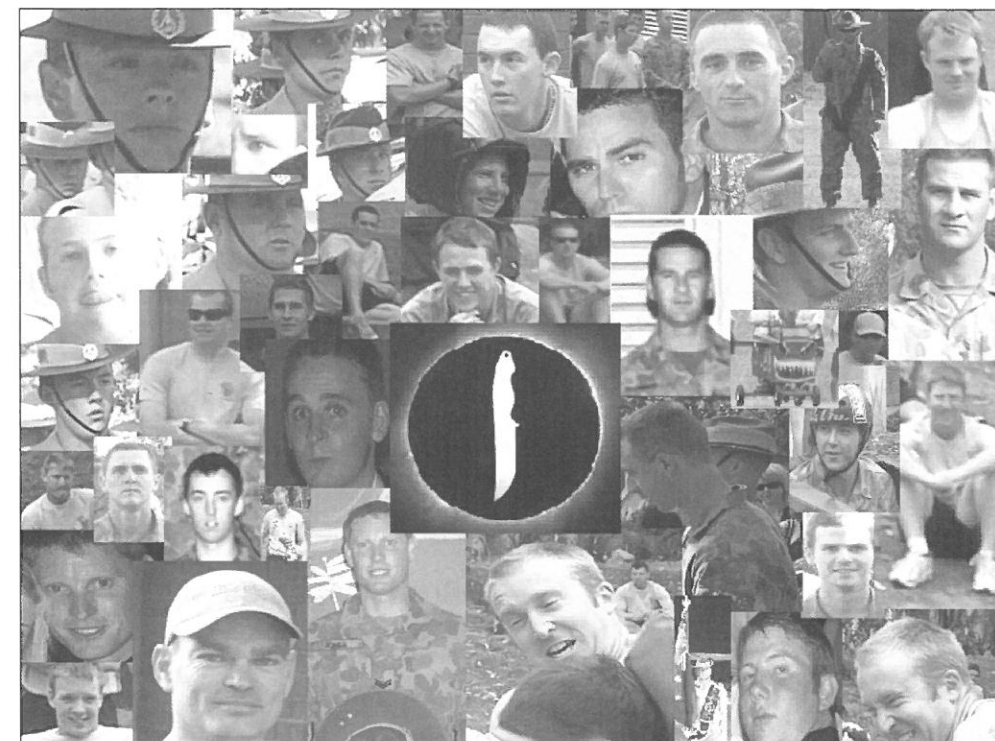
From the very outset, the Platoon Commander (RCB) and Sergeant (MRTF MRE) were away on tasking and this meant a great deal was expected from the JNCOs in regards to the Platoon. To their respective credit CPL Jones and Ryan performed to an excellent level in the initial raising process.

Numerous members have been detached throughout the year on course. From DFSW, PMV Driver/Commander, BCCC, SCCC, SIOS, CFA, CFL and IET. To all of those members who have spent a significant time away from home, well done on gritting out a tough year and the support of your families is greatly appreciated. The qualifications gained throughout 2008 have certainly been quantitative and will no doubt be of great benefit to all in the near future.

With steady growth, what felt like a march in a day, and a random Officer Cadet adoption, 4 Platoon prepared to deploy as a part of OPFOR for SE08. All the JNCOs were removed for either course or tasking which left a pool of PTE soldiers to step up and fill the void. Once again 4 Platoon soldiers proved their professionalism and personal ability. The exercise was varied and certainly tested some members in uncharted waters. Their were some memorable moments, one of which earned the Platoon the nickname of "The Nightstalkers".

Their certainly have been some memorable moments for 4 Platoon throughout 2008, from Davie's "Aqua Blades", Doherty's romantic inclinations, Taylor loosing his flower to Cowan's blood lust.

All in all a good year and ready for another.



5 PLATOON

In June 2008 5 Platoon was raised as a result of the battalions continued growth. The platoon was made up of soldiers just finished IET either from LONG HAI PL or the SOI as well as several soldiers and NCOs posted in from other Battalions.

The platoon maintained a high tempo both in barracks and out in the field, with the platoon deploying on EX TIGERS CHARGE, BN LFX and EX SWIFT EAGLE. In addition to this, the vast majority of the platoon also attended support company courses during 2008. This high tempo meant that private soldiers were constantly stepping up into positions far higher than their worn rank as the NCOs', PLSGT and PLCOMD were away on courses for months on end. This is best seen by the fact that CPL Lewis was away from his wife for over 200 days this year!!!

The platoon has had some of the more notable characters of the battalion in it such as Dale Thorson a.k.a the face of the RAR. The platoon has been terrorised by PTE Quin, Crooks and Burgess who have fulfilled PLSGT role at various stages throughout the year. The Platoon has also done some 'interesting' PT sessions under LT Holloway and CPL Fabre. The influence of the Boss and Sarge in brainwashing the diggers can be best seen through the fact that half of the platoon is going to either Recon/Snipers or DFSW in 2009.

All in all it was a successful year with the majority of the platoon attaining a support company qualification, even PTE Kemp managed to make it into Recon PI. In 2009 members of the platoon will either post to Support Company or 1 Platoon.

EXERCISE LONGLOOK 2008

monument for that Braveheart moment. The only problem I had in Scotland were the strong accents I encountered. The further North I travelled in Scotland the stronger the accent. Luckily for me I was attached to an English unit lacking any Scots.

The soldiers of all three Battalions I served with had nothing but respect for the Australians and were keen to learn as much as possible about Australia – living conditions, army standards, life in general & Neighbours, Home and Away TV programs. I met many British soldiers who were keen to transfer across and some have taken that step. I managed to sell enough of Australia and couldn't help but throw in a few sporting digs at the British. They were more than obliging in return.

Overall, Exercise Long Look 08 was a fantastic and worthwhile experience, both demanding at times, yet, rewarding. The soldiers of all RIFLE Battalions I visited - 3 RIFLES, 4 RIFLES and 5 RIFLES displayed nothing but a positive attitude towards me and ensured that I was well taken care of. The vast majority of the British soldiers

I came across displayed a great sense of humour and great professionalism. The one thing I do take away from my time on Exercise LONGLOOK and will cherish is their ability to get the job done when required and be able to take the piss out of everyone/anyone no matter what. Furthermore through their motto of Swift and Bold the units were able to do the job well even under the strain they are currently experiencing through Operations, lack of public support, retention and logistical issues. In its entirety the British Army is no different to our army.

To those who are given the opportunity to do the Exercise LONGLOOK exchange, it is highly recommended and you will have a wonderful time no matter where you are posted. In my three months I managed to see Germany, Canada, England and Scotland without forgetting Auckland, Hawaii, Las Vegas and Newfoundland. However, good things must come to an end. Due to personal reasons I returned to Australia early knowing that I have achieved more than I had actually expected to achieve. The opportunity to look at British doctrine and work with Commonwealth soldiers (Fijians, Nepalese, Jamaicans and Africans), gaining an insight into the Operational history of the unit, past histories and developing lasting friendships is an experience in itself.



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SGT Cubella

EXERCISE LONGLOOK 2008

time German Army. I arrived at a time when the majority of the Battalion had already left for Canada and I was scheduled to deploy on the last flight out of Germany. I was attached to D Coy.

The unit was currently preparing its Armoured Warrior vehicles for the first MEDMAN Exercises at BATUS (British Army Training Unit Suffield). BATUS was located at Camp Crowfoot a joint British/Canadian establishment and Exercise MEDMAN 1-5 (named after a town called Medicine Hat-Alberta, Canada) is responsible for assessing/conducting the LFX/TESEX for units preparing to deploy on OP TELIC (IRAQ).

The exercise was divided into both an LFX/ TESEX element. The LFX was amazing in regard to the way armour is used alongside armoured reconnaissance vehicles, integrated with Challenger tanks and AS90 artillery. Many of the Live fire activities involved zeroing weapons, pairs and fire team assaults, both day/night/ mounted/dismounted attacks at section/platoon/company level, FIBUA and combined arms attacks, trench, cave and bunker clearances, Battlefield Inoculation ranges (more trench clearances) and to culminate with a Company battle run, Battalion advance to contact, Strike Operations and the Defence of a Bridgehead. As we progressed through phases the intensity picked up and so did the fatiguing element. In the end, the unit achieved the appropriate accreditation to proceed onto the next phase of training; OPTAG in preparation for deployment to Iraq.

The live-fire attacks did not always go according to plan and in many instances the unit was lucky to have walked away unscathed at the best of times. Apart from a crushed arm and broken foot, 2 challenger tanks colliding and a number of UD/ND incidents involving safety staff, such actions are not uncommon to BATUS and from what I gathered each MEDMAN Exercise have at least one fatality. I saw how easily it happens on a number of occasions. Luckily not this time. 5 RIFLES completed Exercise MEDMAN 1 from April – June 2008.

Whilst at BATUS I was given the opportunity to experience a trip into the Rockies for some adventure training. Trails End Camp located in close proximity to the Canadian Rockies is a permanent fixture owned and run by the British Army and staffed by the PTI element. The chance to do some adventure training was something I did not want to miss and headed into the Rockies. Along with 5 MPs the activity chosen for us was Bear Dawn which covered kayaking, trekking, mountain biking, rock climbing and white water rafting. Apart from capsizing several times kayaking, being dumped a couple times white water rafting, not seeing a bear trekking and crashing my mountain bike I completed the activities in full spirit. The highlight was seeing a cougar at the camp grounds without realising that ninety-five per cent of Canadians have never seen a cougar before.

Upon return to BATUS and Camp Crowfoot the majority of the unit had departed for Germany and I

was scheduled to fly out of Calgary on the last flight. I chose to spend a couple of days touring Calgary and unfortunately due to the injury I sustained mountain biking I really could not do too much and I hobbled back into Camp Crowfoot in time to prepare for my return flight to Germany.

Following a week of post exercise admin and getting to know the finer points of Paderborn I returned to the UK and back to my host unit who were preparing to deploy out onto Salisbury Plain. Salisbury plain is better known for its historical significance (Stonehenge) and its archaeological areas. The restrictions we faced were incredible and in many instances the training area was used by the APC, foot traffic and civilian cars. The Bulldog always had right of way.

The exercise I was deploying on was a rollout Exercise with the Bulldog APCs of the unit – the first time the unit have deployed into a conventional war footing since returning from Iraq. The exercise 'Swift Bugle' referred to as 'Slow Trumpet' had me in the Platoon Sergeant position which allowed imparting some of my Aussie expertise and knowledge to the younger and newly arrived soldiers into the Company. My exposure to BATUS and the Warriors put me in a good position to assist the unit in how best to develop doctrine on the employment of Mechanised Infantry in a conventional setting. The training value for the unit was invaluable and they needed an Exercise such as this to forget some of the misfortune experienced in Iraq and the casualties the unit suffered.

The next leg of my trip took me to Edinburgh and Redmond Barracks, home of 3 RIFLES (Light Infantry Unit) – last remaining British Army Unit in Scotland.

No sooner had I arrived I was put onto a bus for a long trip over the border to observe a live-fire demonstration at a boggy training area called Otterburn, North of Newcastle. The Live-fire demonstration run by the Royal Artillery was designed to showcase the capabilities of integrated arms and to prepare the Artillery for deployment into Helmand Province. The practices involved Mortars, DFSW, Javelin, Fast-air; Apache attack helicopters, 105mm field artillery, AS90 155mm artillery, ISTAR feeds, Desert Hawk and the GMLRS (multiple launch rocket system). Towards the end of the demonstration the crowd was broken into several smaller groups to participate in a round robin activity encompassing all of the displays to allow the onlookers to ask any pressing questions that we may have had. An overall impressive display.

The following two weeks had me revert back into a tourist, and the opportunity I was given to travel Scotland in its entirety was taken up within a heartbeat. I managed to see Scotland for its beauty and its history. The city of Edinburgh, Stirling, Urquhart and Edinburgh Castles, Glasgow, Inverness, Fort William, the Highlands, Loch Ness (the only monster I saw was myself next to the shore) and I managed to get up to the William Wallace

6 PLATOON

6 Platoon formed four weeks before the end-of-year Bn Reduced Tempo Period, and was made up of 1x LT, 1xLCPL (the acting PLSGT), and 30x fresh-faced dogs of war straight from Sunny Singleton.

In the Battalion for one day, and before their march-in began, the 'babies' of 6 PL were deployed on OP Brisbane Assist, in support of the civpop and conducting clearing, cleaning and tarping tasks in the suburbs of Arana Hills, Ferny Hills, Keperra and The Gap. Bolstered by the numbers of 3 Platoon, the Company (-) on the ground performed extremely well, and with the leadership of a number of diggers from 3 PL who more than 'stepped up' in Section Commander and Platoon Sgt roles, completed tasks with only hatchets and spades that the SES (with all of their machinery and equipment) were unable to do themselves. When the lads employed that legendary digger ingenuity and mustered up some chainsaws, one too many innocent trees felt the wrath of the over-excited men of 3 and 6 Platoon. The civilians were appreciative nonetheless.

On stand-down, and return to Gallipoli Barracks, the blokes quickly learnt that there was no rest for the wicked and launched straight into a 2x week, urban operations package. Borrowing NCOs from other Platoons and expertly led by CPL Tim Lewis, the guys were practiced in urban shooting techniques, room & building clearances, team and section manoeuvre, urban patrolling, casualty evacuation, PW handling, VCPs, vehicle searching and OPs. This all culminated in EX CITIZEN, where the 6 Platooners were put to the test in a number of difficult scenarios, made more challenging by the physical efforts of role players from 5 PL.

So, from a posted strength of only x2 (a LT and a LCPL), to having a full strength Platoon overnight, the challenges have been there for 6 PL this year. It has been a pleasure working with the lads for the final part of this year, and if their efforts and attitude are indicative of things to come next year, then we will be a force to be reckoned with.



Front Row (L to R): LCPL J. Taylor (PLSGT), LT A. Zimmerlie (PL COMD)

Second Row (L to R): PTE L. Koster, PTE N. Pieters, PTE B. Munro, PTE L. Cawthorne, PTE J. Femino, PTE M. Wilks, PTE D. Magarry.

Third Row (L to R): PTE A. Hinschen, PTE Z. Holbrook, PTE J. Koitka, PTE P. Flanders, PTE R. Roland-Evans, PTE B. Ellery-Plunkett, PTE J. Loken, PTE J. Manning, PTE T. Dicker

Fourth Row (L to R): PTE B. Duncan, PTE T. Janke, PTE S. Sallis, PTE M. Irvine, PTE B. Appel, PTE B. Eschler, PTE G. Jakab von Szengelice, PTE C. Heyes, PTE D. Rutter

8/9 RAR IET COURSE 03 MAR - 06 JUN 08 LONG HAI PLATOON

The Battalion as we are all very much aware was given the charge of running its first IET Course in the rebuild of 8/9 RAR. The Platoon was aptly named Long Hai Platoon, after the Battle Honour the 8th Battalion was awarded during the Vietnam War. It was upon this that the staff designated to run and instruct on this course believed in the importance and relevance of turning out a very good product.

The staff selected for the course was LT Zammit as the PL COMD, SGT Kleid as PL SGT and CPLs Lewis, Hall-Brown, Bisset, Ryan and Kelleher as the Section Commanders. CAPT Schmidt was appointed SI of the course and wasted no time in gathering his crew together and organising the structure and delivery of the program.

The diggers arrived by coach from Singleton and were received by the staff at their accommodation. The next two weeks was designated to the acclimatisation training and basic skills revision, and to allow the Section Commanders to get a feel for who were their potential strengths within their sections. All in all it was quickly identified that the pool of soldiers within the IET course were highly motivated and eager to start the course.

Within the first couple of weeks of the course we quickly went from 48 soldiers down to 40 due to the physical aspects of the training. The tempo stepped up with range week and the MSD training, which saw the boys learn new skills ie arm bars and take downs which from all accounts were used to great effect on the town, JENNO!!!!

Long Hai Platoon then made its way to Wide Bay for HE week where the soldiers were taught and employed the weaponry that brings smiles to any ones face with sneaker and live fire attacks. The platoon was given a well earned rest at Rainbow Beach for a swim and a chance to relax before moving to Shoalwater Bay.

At Shoalwater Bay Long Hai Platoon conducted its urban training at the purpose built facility where soldiers quickly learnt the complexities of engaging the enemy in close quarters as well as the command and control required to

carry out this style of warfare. With Engineer support the DFSW range was built so as the platoon could fire the 66mm and GLA weapon systems which the boys did to a very good standard and finished with a 15km pack march.

The final gig for Long Hai Platoon was the defensive exercise at Greenbank where the 'diggers' learnt all about; funnily enough, digging. Sadly for the platoon staff the lads were down to ohp in good time due to the beach like sand they were easily able to get through. Once again the platoon did very well and was duly noted by LT Zammit and the PL Staff.

The culmination of the IET CSE was the march out, where the soldiers' families and partners were treated to a parade which saw veterans of the both Battalions hand out the unit lanyards, citations and slouch hats with the well earned Regimental badge. Congratulations to PTE D. Thorson for best at PT, PTE K. Scotchford for best shot, PTE M. Kester for the leadership award, PTE A. Scattergood for most improved and student of merit to PTE S. Williams. Duty First



PTE Walker

EXERCISE LONGLOOK 2008

I deployed to the United Kingdom on Exercise LONGLOOK in April 2008. After the pre-deployment mandatory checks at Randwick Barracks, the process of confirming we had the necessary documentation and security clearances to enter the UK we were finally ready to depart. However, an unexpected problem with the RAF Tristar developed, which put a dampener on our travel plans for a couple of days.

Once the RAF overcame its problems and the plane was prepped for departure we departed Sydney with excitement and at the same time uncertainty of what we were in for. The hospitality shown on the plane by the RAF staff was to set the stage for what I was to experience during my 3 months with 4 RIFLES. More on my host unit, 4 RIFLES later. The plane trip was as you would expect from a C-130 Variant – rough, bumpy and uncomfortable. However, apart from the time spent in the air the food and the overall service on the plane were second to none and it felt as though the Brits wanted to make a lasting impression on us.

The first leg of the journey took us to Auckland for a quick 16hr stopover and to pickup our New Zealand counterparts. The second leg had us arrive in Hawaii for yet another 16hr layover with the majority of the contingent hitting Waikiki beach and the city nightlife. The following morning a number of us took a quick trip out to Pearl Harbour whilst the others were still hangover from a big night. The third and most entertaining of the stopovers was Las Vegas. Apart from propositions by casino hookers and the large amount of alcohol consumed, names like MGM, Caesar's Palace, Luxor and Flamingo to name a few, were soon forgotten and the return to our own hotel that morning was paramount as we had a flight to catch. The last legs were uneventful with a quick fuel stop at Newfoundland, Canada before we flew into Brize Norton just in time for lunch.

No sooner had we landed that we immediately fled the terminal for our new homes. I was met at the terminal by a representative from my host unit who was at the best of times hard to understand due to his strong accent – a problem I had whilst on Exercise. Arriving at Kiwi Barracks, Bulford home of 4 RIFLES I really questioned my

living arrangements. The British Army was going through a massive redevelopment of its bases and Bulford was in that process upon my arrival. Until that time I was to make do with what I had.

The unit I was attached to was 4 RIFLES (Mechanised Infantry Unit), located in Wiltshire and used the Bulldog APC. A number of units were disbanded and then amalgamated into a super Regiment which became known as the RIFLES. Units with such a proud and distinguished history dating back to the Napoleonic Wars such as The Royal Green Jackets, Devon & Dorset Light Infantry, the Light Infantry and The Royal Gloucester, Bulford and Wiltshire Light Infantry formed 5 regular RIFLE Battalions and 2 TA Battalions. The Army chose to create the RIFLES as one unique Regiment and the leading unit alongside that of the Parachute Regiment and The Royal Marines – all unique in their own kind of way.

The soldiers of 4 RIFLES were hospitable towards me and ensured that my welfare was not taken for granted. No sooner had I met those I was to work with that I was packing my bags for Germany and then to Canada to visit and Exercise with 5 RIFLES – one of the sister Battalions.

Germany and Canada was an opportunity I did not turn down when offered. My first destination was to the home of 5RIFLES (Armoured Infantry Unit) who forms part of the 20th ARMOURED BDE which is the biggest British Battlegroup. 5 RIFLES was located in the German town of Paderborn – a British Garrisoned town. The Barracks itself was an old German Army establishment which was painted white to hide the ugly grey colour of the war-



RAEME PLATOON

My how the year has flown. From the inevitable discharge at the thought of getting posted out of Brisbane, to the appointment of ASM, in a newly re-raised infantry Battalion. I considered this an honour to be the first ASM of 8/9 RAR in its new PMV era. Upon march in to the Unit it was quickly ascertained that I was to be the only RAEME contingent for the year. Minor hurdle aside, I proceeded to locate my office. Office found, desk found, computer and phone NOT found. Three months later a new office, computer and phone. With the creation of the required corporate governance documentation and registers now in full swing it was time for a change. RAEME hat off and RAAOC/RACT hat on. A trip to DNSDC via Singleton to pick up stores was on the cards. Two near identical trips later and even the CO was starting to wonder, to which Corp I belonged. As the year progressed and some equipment/vehicles started to roll in, so did the newly qualified truckies and the rapid onset of my grey hairs. With vehicle accidents, roller door repairs and refuelling mishaps on the increase, proportionally so did the work loads of the QM, RQMS and myself. As the end of the year approaches and the one month long stocktake of the RAEME Workshop all but complete a shimmer of light appears (albeit after a DEMS Request or two for the repair of that light). Hopefully after a smooth handover of the Workshop facility in Dec 08 and the march in of approximately a dozen Tradies in Jan 09, the workshop can get down to the serious business of producing the ultimate Billy Cart. PS The ASM's Shilling Supply Business looks strong to continue in 2009.



8/9 RAR ADMIN COMPANY 2008

Well the first of many articles for Admin Company 8/9RAR. I have been chosen to hit the keyboards and have both something entertaining and interesting in the first year of 8/9RAR since it was re-raised. It has been at times demanding but enjoyable 2008.

The Company initially was a whole eight soldiers covering the majority of things what the company does. Some of the characters within the company is the RQMS, Warrant Officer Ray "Gruffy" Weiland if you have met him you would understand the nickname. Gruffy has a good way of speaking the Queens language. If you take out all the swear words he wouldn't say to much at all. Ray has elected to take discharge in February 2009 and will sorely missed by all members of the Company and the unit. Thanks for of your efforts whilst you have been with the unit. Good luck to you and Von. I'll have to find another bike rider in the new year.

Another character is Cpl Clancy "G.M." Fallon our resident yabbie for the unit. I'll let Clancy explain the GM but a little secret it doesn't stand for General Motors. GM was the RQMS right hand man and the brunt of some seriously good jokes. That is depending if you were the RQ or Clancy. He still managed to keep the QM and RQ entertained on a daily basis. With the football season finished Clancy and Sgt Blue McGuire will have to find something else to do every second Friday. Both are mad rugby league followers and attend most of the Broncos games, poor souls.

The transport section has steadily grown over the last few months. At one stage we had more drivers than vehicles. Private Allen (Muscles, "Krill") and Mathews (Chinchilla) have improved their style of driving and haven't hit any trees (except his own car!!!) in the last couple of months. Keep up the good work. Cpl Sally Bury (TP, ask her about this one) is off now on posting to Puckapunyal on promotion to Sergeant. This is after submitting her discharge paperwork and also asking for a transfer to RAAOC. All this paperwork was submitted within a week. Not sure if I would like to be Sally's career adviser. I have already a headache just writing about it. We wish her and the family the very best in the future.

The RAP staff have been stabbing and caring for unit personnel out of the 9RQR RAP. They are certainly will be glad when the Doctor and other staff arrive in the New Year. They have worked well for a small team helping out with sub unit activities as well as attending their own

promotion courses. A small team but a good one.

Here are some of the antics, gags and sayings that happened during the year in Admin Company.

1. Question "RSM where do I pay the tax on my gift that I received today. (Pte Allen)

Reply "What the ****, who told you about this crap, (set up by QM and RQ)

2. Convincing "Lenny Loose Lips" that because the unit mascot was a ram everyone was to wear hug boots to the ball, (RQ)
3. QM creating an OPDEM for some "Glen 20" during the LFX because of the RQ's wind problem,
4. RQ are you going to the Pineapple Hotel on Saturday. "Clancy" asked a dozen times

And replied a dozen times, Clancy what the **** are you on about. I still don't think they made it to the hotel.

5. Teaching the CO the rules of that difficult card game "Pass the Ace" I think it took one hand he had mastered the game. Please talk to the CO for any information on the game.
6. QM and RQ trying to convince the ASM to convert to "Q", but after his eventful trip to Sydney to pick up NFE, no luck, as he said "never again". Well since the "never again speech" the ASM has done two more trips, still hopeful for a convert.

Admin Company is expected to move into their new office and stores work areas in the near future, we hope. This will give all platoons a sense of ownership. All in all, the Company has achieved many milestones in a short period and will continue to do so in future years.

I thank all staff for their efforts during the year. Have a safe and Merry Xmas and Happy New Year. Good soldiering.

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TRANSPORT PLATOON 8/9 RAR 2008

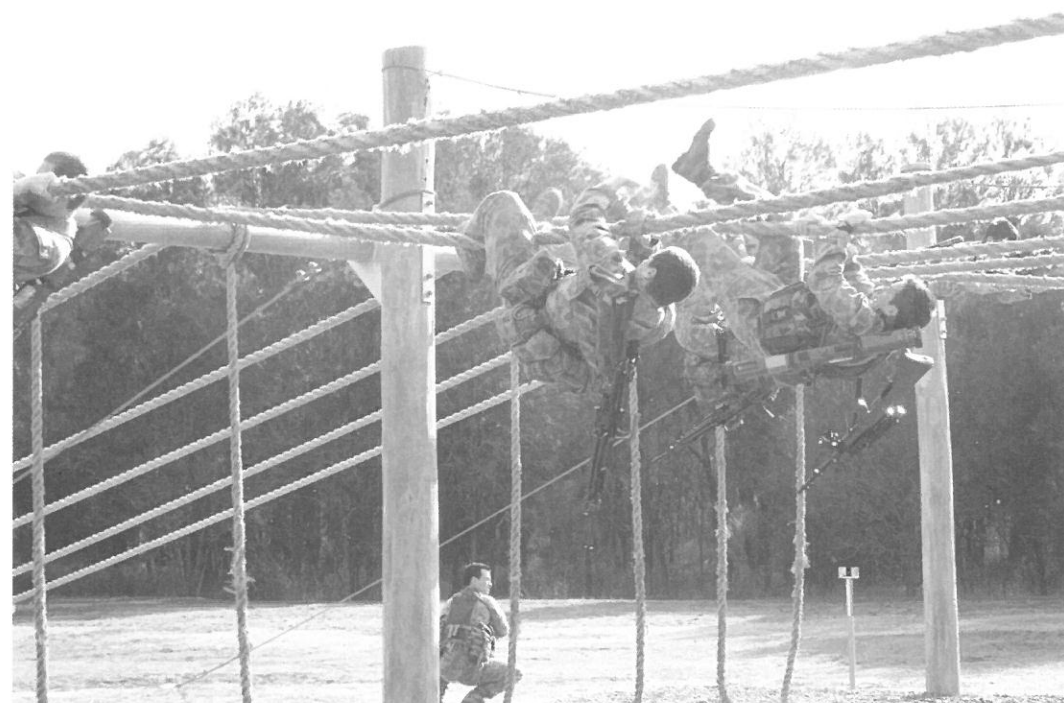
In January of 2008 the Transport Platoon of 8/9 RAR consisted of one Corporal and a Private. The Battalion's fleet of white and green vehicles numbered zero and transport support requests were coming in thick and fast, to support the Battalion's training program and field commitments. This was a busy and challenging period of time for the Platoon as they quickly tried to establish relationships with the key staff of the B Vehicle Loan Pool and other Transport Managers from across the Brigade. These relationships would become vital to the Battalion's ability to resource and execute their training activities in the near future.

As the months rolled on by the Battalion continued to receive more "Truckies" from the School of Transport and the vehicle fleet began to build. As vehicles continued to arrive from other units across the Brigade, so did the servicing and maintenance liability, as the majority of vehicles were categorised as Restricted Use only. The outstanding maintenance issues were quickly overcome and the Platoon was into the field supporting Battalion

level IET course. During this period the Platoon was also generating the Battalion's Transport SOP's, and establishing a transport framework for the Unit, prior to deploying on EX Swift Eagle.

Looking towards next year the Transport Platoon will continue to grow as the Battalion does, with the posting in of a transport qualified Sergeant and more "Truckies". The Battalion will be looking to receive a large amount of PMV's throughout the year and will continue to build the white and green fleet.

Overall this has been an exciting and challenging year for the Platoon. With the help and professionalism of all the "Truckies", the foundations are now set for the Battalion's Transport capability to build. We are all looking forward to meeting the challenges that lie ahead next year and will remain "Par oneri" (Equal to the Task).



Q PLATOON

The Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Simon Stuart started off with a rather poignant statement. I quote "Do the best you can with what you've got".

The Commanding Officer's statement; which loosely translated means (beg, borrow, steal and offer up your 1st born) came into its own at this stage.

Main Tasks - Set up Q Store, Support IET CSE and grow with the Battalion.

Problems - Warehouse not loaded to district, Empty Q Store, lack of "Q" members, Empty Armoury and lack of offices, computers and other office equipment.

The Q Staff (a mixture of RAINF and RAAOC); Major Rod Clavan **QM**, Warrant Officer Class 2 Ray Weiland **RQMS**, Sergeant Adam (Blue) McGuire **SRS/AMMO/Purchasing**, Corporal Clancy (GM) Fallon **RPS/CFL** and Corporal Jeff Inglis LSA, CQMS commenced the arduous yet laborious task of setting up the Main Q Store.

Solutions - Liaise with BDE IOT have warehouse loaded, inundate Sergeant Adam (Blue) McGuire with AB189's for purchasing, borrow equipment from other units, start early and finish late IOT have access to a computer and raising demands like a man possessed once the warehouse was loaded.

The start of the year saw the re-raising of the Battalion begin with earnest. With that in mind, the Rams Battalion kicked off with conducting the first in a series of IET courses to bolster the ranks of the mighty Battalion. A very good outcome by all involved.

The QM & RQMS are both workaholics which set us up in good stead for the year to come. Sergeant Blue McGuire was left mainly to his own devices to deal with the requesting of Ammunition for the IET CSE and fulfilling all the purchasing requests for the Battalion. Corporal Clancy Fallon was in his element conducting PT and raising requests for Repair Parts, Corporal Jeff Inglis was offered his SUBJ 2 SGT RAAOC course, which he grabbed with both hands.

Towards the end of March, our numbers within the Q environment were bolstered by the arrival of three Private Storeman; Mark (me leg I can't feel me leg) Douglas, Joel (my back my back) Field and Craig (Tom Jones Junior) Shaw, fresh from their IET. This would normally have reduced our excessive workload. However, we still only had two computers and limited storage areas.

It is now October and the hits just keep coming, the Ram's Battalion is now tasked with running a sniper course and a DFSW (mag58 & 84mm) unit qualification course.

Yet we seem to have forgotten the IET and SIOS course being conducted simultaneously or had they!!!

CPL Inglis returned from his course and was promptly moved to B Company (Jeff was later promoted to sergeant) with PTE Shaw in toe to support the IET CSE. This is another story best left for another time.

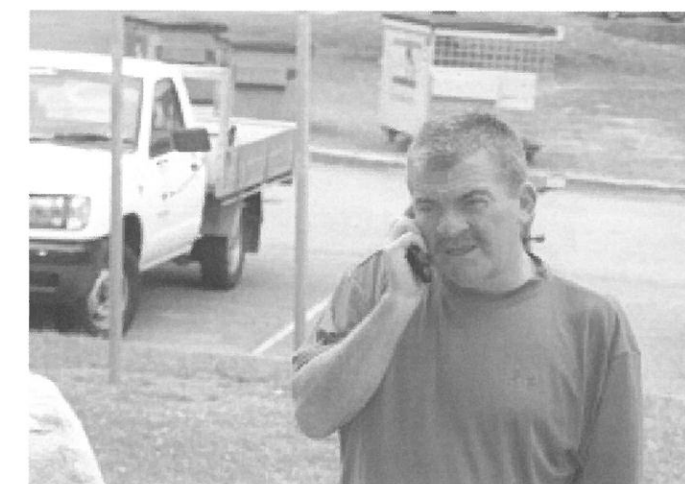
Our manning was bolstered in June by the arrival of Lance Corporal Lenny (Loose lips) Lignow from Townsville, Lance Corporal Graham (I know boats) Ewart posted from 6RAR and by Private Tina (Picasso) Rowe (who transferred from 25/49 RQR to Regulars), July saw Private Allen (The Shovel) Mikovic arrive from Bandiana directly from IET's. October saw the arrival of Sergeant Rob Wittup and Corporal Jamie Strothfeldt.

Promotions - Corporal to Sergeant Jeff Inglis
Private to Lance Corporal Craig Shaw.

A busy year had by one and all and next year looks just as hectic. Sergeant Adam (Blue) McGuire is moving on to Alpha Company, thanks for all of your help during the year Blue, enjoy the reduced tempo. Warrant Officer Ray Weiland is finishing his army career in February 2009 good luck to him for the future.



SGT McGuire



MAJ Clavan

RAISING 8/9 RAP 2008

This year marked the beginning and raising of the 8/9 RAR Regimental Aid Post. The RAP began initially under Cpl Binyon and Pte Parkes, and it wasn't long till Cpl Brown joined the RAP. Initially the RAP helped out with Long Hai Platoon (IET course) as well as range shoots and live fire exercises in the first half of the year. It also conducted needle parades when ever possible, but due to our doctor deficiency this was a hard task to achieve. We supported Swift Eagle and now SIO-S as well as the current IET course. We have also offered education for the CFA course, first aid training when needed, and the CFAs have helped us out in return.

Without a doctor it has been a cooperative effort of the 8/9 RAP and 6 RAR RAP to provide health care for the soldiers throughout the year through the use of their doctor. Throughout the year the RAP has also coexisted with the 9 RQR RAP in the same building, and it has had its ups and downs as well as some rivalry between each

other. The battalion has increased in size significantly, but with the whole battalion now in the interactive health keys system it has never been easier to provide medical support and health care to 8/9 RAR.

Next year we welcome even more medics, and finally a doctor, to join the RAP under control of the WOMED, WO2 Jellatt. It has been a good paced year with exercises, courses and events requiring medical support which the RAP has provided support for and will continue to in the future. The RAP has made itself ready for 2009 through the hard work of the medics and support corps to get the equipment, supplies and personnel needed as well as maintaining the medical readiness of the unit. All in all it has been good year to raise 8/9 RAR's Regimental Aid Post and provide the foundation for the unit's healthcare.

See you at the next needle parade.



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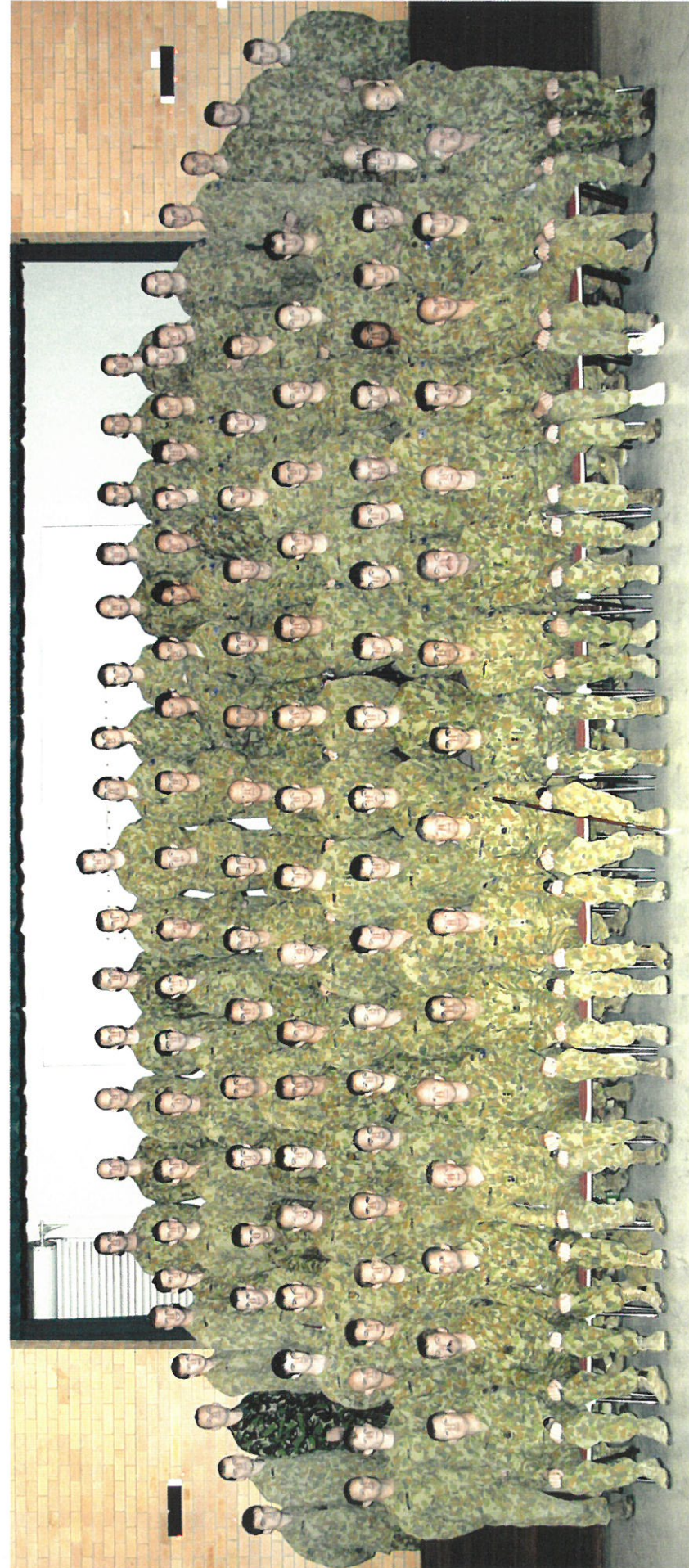
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