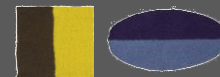




# 31<sup>st</sup>/42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

## The Royal Queensland Regiment



### CO's Introduction



LTCOL Damien Green

As the year starts to rapidly draw to an end I look back and am very impressed with what has been achieved by the Battalion. We have contributed to domestic and overseas operations,

built on our tactical abilities, raised new capability, familiarised ourselves with the new Combat Marksmanship Continuum and been very active recruiting from, whilst increasing our presence, in the community.

The primary focus of the second half of the year was the Battalions contribution to 3 BDE EX BROLGA RUN 2019. Our commitment to this Exercise (in particular Battlegroup CANNAN) was the contribution of a Rifle platoon, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Platoon as well as the planning and conduct of the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise. Although the High Risk Weather season resulted in a late change to the way the exercise was conducted (cancelling the majority of the live fire activities), the Battalions contribution to every part of the exercise was successful and noteworthy.

Although everyone was looking forward to a slow end to the year (post Exercise) the Company's still had a Training Weekend to complete before mothballing our gear over the Christmas break. These training weekends also provided the opportunity to farewell some of our staff as they head off on posting outside of the Battalion. To

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those who are posting out – I thank you very much for your valued contributions to the Battalion during your tenure. I would also like to wish the very best for the future to you and your family.

Personnel posting out from BHQ are LT Courtney McKenzie, WO1 Ashley Barker, WO2 Dale Ingram (transfer), SGT Kev Valle, CPL Jason Kepper (retiring), CPL Craig Knight (transfer) and PTE Shelby Jones. Additionally, our thoughts and prayers also go out to the Whitehouse family.

As we wrap up the year we are also keeping an eye on our future requirements which could once again require us to react in assistance to the community in the event of a disaster. This means our personal administration must be squared away prior to going on leave. In 2020 the first priority will be Induction/Force Preservation Awareness Training (FPAT) to ensure everyone can get back into training as quickly as possible. We will be looking to address as many individual training shortfalls as we can in the first quarter of 2020 so we can focus our attention on collective tactical training prior to EX HAMEL 20.

In summary, I believe the year has been extremely successful thanks to the excellent contributions made by the soldiers, Non Commissioned Officers, Senior Non Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers and Officers of the Battalion. You should be justifiably proud, as I am, of your efforts throughout 2019. As we wrap up the year I would like to thank the families of the Battalion for their support over a busy year and I wish you all a very enjoyable and safe Christmas break. I look forward to seeing you all back well rested in 2020 to get into some excellent training.

LTCOL Damien Green

## RSM's Update



Well the end of the year quickly approaches and looking back at 2019 it has been a very high tempo year for the Battalion. In the last six months alone, the Battalion has conducted Training Weekends, Courses, Conferences, Dinners, Recruiting Activities, a Military Skills Competition and attended Exercise Brolga Run. Throw in there also a good dose of corporate governance, career management and travel and it's understandable that getting a weekend off can be tough.

Some of the notable activities and events that have filled the calendar in the last six months include the Queensland Police Service Graduation Parade of which both the Commanding Officer and I attended on behalf of the Commander 11 Brigade (Brigadier David Thomae) and Brigade Regimental Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class 1 David Bromwich). The parade was held at the Townsville

Basketball Stadium and had a good turn out and the graduating class did an excellent job with their personal drill and their swearing in ceremony. It also just so happened that one of the Battalion members was graduating at the parade as well, SGT Scott Benfield had recently taken up the challenge to protect and serve the community as a Police Officer and since January had been completing his training at the academy. It was a real honour to be there for such an auspicious occasion.

Next significant event was my attendance at the Senior Enlisted Leadership Conference that was held at Kokoda Barracks in September. The conference is conducted over 3 days and comprises a series of lectures, discussions and working groups. The Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army (Warrant Officer Grant MacFarlane) was in attendance and addressed the conference as well as a number of visiting lecturers such as the Commander FORCOMD, Commander SOCAUST, Tier Charlie Regimental Sergeant Majors and visiting Sergeant Majors from the United Kingdom, United States of America, Singapore, New

Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Fiji. The focus of the conference was to discuss the Chief of Armies key concepts of Army in Motion, Accelerated Warfare and Good Soldiering and how we are implementing these ideas throughout the Army and the challenges ahead. Overall the conference generated a lot of discussion, was well attended and provide some good outcomes and food for thought.

Another worthy mention is on the Honours and Awards front, we saw a few nominations submitted by BHO and the Companies to recognise the tremendous effort that some individuals have made and continue to make in the Battalion. The majority of these I am happy to report have advanced to the next round for consideration at 2 Division and Forces Command Headquarters and hopefully we will learn if these were successful in 2020. However, one significant mention is the presentation of an Army Bronze Commendation to LT Courtney Mackenzie for her outstanding efforts as the Platoon Commander of the 11 Brigade contingent during OP Townsville Flood Assist 2019.

There are plenty more activities, functions and achievements that happened in the second half of 2019, but these are just to name a few. As the year winds down and so does the tempo I would like to thank every member of the Battalion for your hard work this year. I hope you all have a safe and restful break over the Christmas period and come back refreshed and reinvigorated ready for 2020 and Exercise Hamel.

For those that are leaving the Battalion, I wish you and your families all the best in the future and I thank you for your service. For those remaining I look forward to getting out and about with the Commanding Officer and seeing the Battalion and doing some "Good Soldiering" together and making it fun in the process in 2020.

**WO1 John Stafford**



## OPSO's Update

I would like to thank all of you for your enthusiasm and energy during 2019. There are some important milestones to note for 2020 and some changes to Combat Shooting that have meant the postponement of course from late March to early May. The S3/Ops and S7 Shops will be very light on next year with the departure of the WO2 Dale Ingram without replacement, the retirement of CPL Jason Kepper, the relocation of WO1 Ash Barker to Albury-Wodonga and the RSS vacancy.

All OICs and SS will be undertaking the LRS Practical during the FPAT weekend (07-09 Feb 20) that means all will need to have completed the LRS Re-Certification with a copy of the certificate to the RSM prior to the weekend.

FPAT – will include weapons/Weapon Training Simulation System (WTSS), Land Range Safety (LRS) Practical and mandatory trg; for those not attending FPAT mandatory trg is to be completed NLT 29 Feb 20.

Army Combatives Program (ACP) 1-4 first sessions will delivered during the week 23-27 Mar 20.

Professional Military Education (PME) – Ambushing and HE during the weekend 27-28 Mar 20 at TFTA.

Combat Shooting during the week 11-16 May 20.

Army First Aid (AFA) during the Brigade Course Period (BCP) period 02-10 May 20 with some non-continuous sessions TBA.

See you in 2020 my last year in the Army – Seagull out.

**MAJ Chris Rosenthal**

## ADJTs Update

2019, what a year! Leaving the comfy umbrella of the Sig world where the answer to every question is 'turn it off and on again', I strode into the mysterious gloom of the Infantry world. Full of big scary people who make things go bang. Lol jokes, it was nothing like that. Although I was precarious to start with, what I found was an ambitious and welcoming unit, who truly want the best for their soldiers and individuals who are willing to go that extra mile. Really just an awesome group of people who don't mind rubbing themselves against a bit of dirt every once in a while.

It all started with the 100 year flood. Only being a few weeks into the job, I jumped at the opportunity to be the Contingent Commander for the 11BDE contribution to the flood efforts. It truly was one of the most humbling experiences of my life and an amazing opportunity to test my skills as a leader and surrounded myself with the best individuals. For everyone who was involved in that, I truly could not be more thankful.

It's safe to say that the time I spent doing actual ADJT work was somewhat subdued due to the fact that I instead eagerly put my hand up for every course known to man. Having completed ACP (levels 1-4), BMS (1-4), Combat Shooting, Care of the Battle Casualty (CBC), AFA and a variety of weapon qualifications, I may just be the wariest Sig Officer in the Army. But seriously, the choice to complete a Continuous Full Time Service (CFTS) contract in a new Battalion outside of my Corps has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. It quite literally has been the perfect opportunity to grow as a Junior Officer and set myself up for to an array of future possibilities.

Major exercises are always exciting for Units, for many, it is the one chance that they are able to join together in one location. And for 31/42 RQR, that is no different. Being a part of Exercise Brolga Run was a fantastic opportunity in more ways than one. Having only commanded at Platoon level, being a part of an exercises but at a BHO level allowed me to gain a real insight on how these exercises are run but from a higher level. To see all of the large scale planning down to single person movements, has given me a hindsight that I know will be useful in future years.

A massive highlight this year was the opportunity to compete in the Australian Alpine Snowsports Championships for which I was lucky enough to represent the Army. I mean as difficult as it was being



paid to ski for a week in perfect conditions whilst staying in a 5 star resort, I managed to get through. And absolutely on the check list to participate in every year (do it, really the only sport worth doing).

To anyone who is thinking of doing the same or unsure whether to take on a job role out of your trade, all I can say is just get out there and jump in. I never thought a Junior Subbie like myself could survive in an Infantry Battalion but here we are, at the conclusion of one of the most rewarding years of my life.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this year with me. I am so thankful to have been welcomed into the Unit with open arms and to have been guided by such passionate and motivated people. To the CO, RSM and the rest of the Unit, thanks for taking a chance with a young Subbie who has slightly too much energy and watched slightly too many Disney movies, it's been a hell of a year and I cannot thank you all enough.

However, my final word as I depart on posting is this... SIGS CORPS, BEST CORPS. (Ed Note – "NOT")

LT Courtney McKenzie

## RSO's Update



In the first half of 2019 I was very fortunate to deploy to the Philippines. All information that follows is UNCLASS personal experience or obtained from open source internet material.

For decades there has been conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFoP) and various violent splinter groups on the southern island of Mindanao. The Philippine army is four times the size of ours and they have some of the world's best jungle warfighters. However, on the streets of Marawi in 2017 the AFoP lost over 1400 soldiers WIA and 168 KIA against 978 militants KIA (Wikipedia). Nearly 200,000 civilians were forced from their homes and the city was utterly destroyed.

"Operation Augury is the Australian Defence Force's partnership activity with the AFoP, focused on sharing experiences and approaches to countering complex urban terrorist tactics. Australia's participation is focused on providing insight and experiences from recent ADF operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines sharing knowledge from their recent experiences in Marawi." (Defence internet website)

I worked in the headquarters and my role was the Battle Captain and Communications Officer. I managed current ops, monitored the comms equipment and ran a small IT help desk. We had daily contact with Filipino military officials to plan training activities over the length and breadth of the country.

Highlights of the trip were:

- a. Having dinner with the Chief of the Defence Force, a dozen Filipino Generals and many influential Manila business people in the private residence of the Australian Ambassador.
- b. Hosting 60 Minutes when they came to film their story on the presence of ISIS.
- c. Visiting Clark Air Force Base and Fort Magsaysay, both truly immense bases on Luzon.

- d. Visiting the US War Cemetery and seeing the endless rows of crosses over 25,000 graves.
- e. Watching from the sidelines, the conduct of EXERCISE BALIKATAN, a US-Filipino Exercise involving a US Naval Task Group sporting the best of modern military might.
- f. Being interviewed by the ABC on Anzac Day and having friends and relatives listening in Brisbane.
- g. 100km an hour madness in the most chaotic and congested traffic in the world.
- h. Visiting the War Memorial on Corregidor Island, the last stand of US Forces in the Philippines and the second most heavily bombed location of WW2.

The Philippines sits adjacent to one of the world's most strategically significant hotspots. It is an unstable nexus of power, religion, resource exploitation and population migration and much of what happens



there sends ripples around the world. The deployment gave me the opportunity to work with a very capable team. The team contributed to safety and stability in our region and the skills I picked up will hopefully be of significant benefit to 31/42 RQR.

I want to say thank you to my wife for her support and for dealing with all the usual family issues whilst I was away. We can't do what we do without the support of family.

Merry Christmas.

**CAPT Cam Atkinson**

## 7 Shop Update

The last six months has seen the birth of the Bn's "In Your Own Time Go On" (IYOTGO) group on FORCENET. Fifty percent of the Bn are now "Connected" and can access a range of professional development readings; links; Pams; History and recommended Podcasts and YouTube links to assist in your own professional development. SGT Lowien and CPL Kepper have searched high and low, suffered through hours of YouTube viewing and Podcast listening to provide you with all the informative content you will find in the group. Don't forget to provide feedback to the Training Cell via the email link provided on the links page. If you have any material you want added, send it to us for vetting and we will add it for everyone to use.

If you are not already a member on FORCENET, get on the train and sign up. Once you have, email your PMKeys number to [ashley.barker@defence.gov.au](mailto:ashley.barker@defence.gov.au) and I will send you an invite to the group.

Sadly we farewell CPL Jason Kepper this year, after 29 years of service to both 31 RQR and 31/42 RQR. Good luck in your future endeavours and thank you for the time and effort you have given to the Bn. From the S7 team we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Great New Year of training.

**WO1 Ash Barker**

## Battalion Military Skills Competition



The annual 31/42 ROR Military Skills Competition for 2019 was conducted at Lavarack Barracks over the period 16-17 September 2019. This year the competition had three sections (1 x Kennedy Coy, 2 x Capricornia Coy) competing and was conducted over two days. The competition comprised of nine activities these being; All Corps PESA, Obstacle Course, Observation Lane with Judging Distances, Navigation theory, Care of the Battle Casualty, Communication and All Arms Call for Fire, General Military Knowledge and Combat Marksmanship Shoot being the new Rifle Practice 3A.

The first activity was the All Corps PESA which kicked off the competition at 0600hrs on the Saturday morning. Nearly all participants completed this activity successfully with only one or two failing the water jerry carry.

From there given the numbers in attendance and the support staff available the next three stands were conducted as a round robin with Obstacle Course familiarisation, Observation and Judging Distances Lane and the Navigation Theory stand. Each stand was designed to test the soldiers in the basic skills of soldiering. One of the highlights was to see the soldiers going through the Obstacle Course and the difficulty that wearing body armour presents when trying to negotiate the course. Another highlight was watching the sections going through the Obs lane and seeing how many items they could pick up whilst patrolling through the lane. The majority picked up most items but it pays to stop and check your six o'clock. These stands were all completed by lunchtime with a transition over to the eastern side of Lavarack Barracks for the recommencement post lunch.

After lunch the next three stands kicked off with Care of the Battle Casualty, Communications and All Arms Call for Fire and the General Military Knowledge stands. Some of the highlights from these stands were seeing the sections on the Care of the Battle Casualty Stand. All Sections worked as a team to secure the scene with the casualty then having first aid applied rapidly to increase the chances of survival whilst still being in contact with the enemy. These skills are a critical component of what Infantry does on the battlefield and the lessons learnt over the past two decades are now implemented and incorporated in our training of the next generation of warriors.

The All Arms Call for Fire stand with the Section Commanders and ZIC's demonstrated that there was some skill fade in this particular area that we need to address and revise in the future. The ability for commanders and ZIC's to call in offensive support is a critical skill on the modern battlefield and an essential Battlespace Operating System (BOS) to be familiar and proficient with.

When these stands concluded the competing teams paused and had some dinner before rotating through the WTSS to complete the new Combat Marksman Continuum shoot – Rifle Practice 3A. This shoot covers off on engagement of multiple targets both static and moving over ranges of 100m, 200m and 300m. The stand was also assessing the member's combat behaviours. All soldiers young and old agree that the new continuum is challenging and enjoyable. At the completion of the RP3A practice teams



were dismissed until next morning. At this stage the competition was too close to call on the points and it was anyone's race.

The next morning the sections arrived bright and early at the Obstacle course ready to go through on their timed runs. The pace set by the first section C/S 10 was impressive and the techniques used to negotiate each obstacle was hard to fault. The next section C/S 20 did a good job but couldn't beat the previous callsign for time and technique. The final section C/S 30 had a good crack but at the end of the day no one could beat the C/S 10 the Kennedy Coy section.

At the end of the Obstacle Course the Soldiers disappeared, handed in stores, showered and reconvened at BHO in the vicinity of the memorial rock. With great anticipation the results were read out. Coming in at **3rd place was C/S 10** the Kennedy Section, at **2nd place was C/S 30** the Mackay Section from Capricornia Coy and **1st place went to C/S 20** the Rockhampton Section of Capricornia Coy.

Overall, An excellent competition and in the end very close results with only a few points difference between the three sections. Next year we will look at a more physical competition with a few more tactical stands (Weather Permitting).

**WO1 John Stafford**

## Unit Recruiting Liaison Officer's Report

Another year complete and the recruiting of the future riflemen for the battalion is never complete. Well this year has been an interesting year to say the least. Well what have we been up to from the last newsletter? The last half of year has been really busy with providing direct support to Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) and the Brigade Recruiting Cell (BRC). We and the BRC supported NAIDOC week which was a great success apart from me trying to dodge my customers from civilian work, lol (people who know me will understand). After this was the Lavarack Barracks Open day, my wife was not impressed as we had to cut my holiday in the Whitsundays short to attend this one (let's say I was sleeping outside with the dog for few days after that). Then we had a few small events where I had to hobnob with local, state and federal politicians. Our Tuesday information nights proceeded as usual but unfortunately some key BRC staff had to leave. This meant the unit had to step up and act as caretakers of the BRC. CPL Galvin was the only member that remained and he is doing an outstanding job (keep up the great work).

After taking over the BRC we then managed to get a recruiting activity at Wilmar Mill in Ingham (The ADJT loved the early morning drive to Ingham). This led us into the final part of the year and the Long Tan Youth Awards. These awards are given to Year 10 and 12 students that have demonstrated high standards in leadership within the school and community. I got very proficient in ironing polys. Lol, reminds me of the good old days at 2 RAR. I have to mention LT McKenzie and her heroic actions on the night of the 06 November 2019,

*"For outstanding courage and initiative at Saint Margaret Marys College Awards Night on 06 November 2019. While Conducting the Long Tan Youth Award, she selflessly positioned herself and rendered first aid to an elderly lady after a fall during the event. Her prompt action allowed the causality to be stabilized and evacuated safely to the Townsville hospital in a timely and effective manner. LT McKenzie then remained on task and completed her objective of presenting the Long Tan Youth Award."*

LT McKenzie then presented the award with blood on her hands and on her uniform, (She is becoming more of an infantry officer every day). Currently, we have a heap of Infantry soldiers in OUR just waiting on courses to align for training, so the battalion is looking good for the future. Also, we have been receiving applications from ARA to come across who are always welcome.

I would like to thank the PO Brendan Matchett and CPL Shy McCartney for their support over the year and all the assistance they had provided over the last 12 months. DFR will be working up to the final days before Christmas and will be back to normal operation on the 6 Jan 20 with heaps of brand-new staff. One final thanks to LT McKenzie, it has been a great year and it has been great working beside you. Good luck with your future Army Career and good luck in the city of vegans, Melbourne.

If you need any information or you have great ideas for recruiting, please feel free to contact me via email or mobile. [grant.lowien@defence.gov.au](mailto:grant.lowien@defence.gov.au), 042769809.

Lowie Out.



## Exercise First Step - 26-28 July

After being postponed due to floods at the start of the year EX FIRST STEP 2019 was conducted at Komiatum Barracks Mackay from 26-28 Jul 19. The purpose of this activity was to synchronise the efforts across the Battalion for the new Financial Year.

On arrival in Mackay on the Friday afternoon the BHO staff decided to head to the Gym in order to make up for an early start on the highway to Mackay from Townsville. It was during this gym visit that the Adjutant was observed to experience an important lesson on the difference between the metric and imperial system when she unsuccessfully attempted to jump on a treadmill at 13 mph as opposed to kmh. The result was the rocketing of a mobile phone complete with headphones into the back wall after it was launched by the treadmill followed by a very impressive windmill running style culminating in a fall that even a seasoned comedy actor would have been supremely proud of. Suitably entertained BHO then made their way back to the Barracks to tell all personnel they came into contact with about the ADJTs future career as a stunt woman.

The conference kicked off with the usual technology problems that delayed the start by about an hour but after pushing through - death by powerpoint was able to commence. Throughout the day the Battalion Staff and Command elements down to Platoon level provided and received briefs pertinent to the way the Battalion must operate to live within our means and achieve our specified tasks. A special shout out goes to SGT Marks who was able to secure a guest speaker on Guerrilla Warfare from the local community for an opportunity presentation.

At the conclusion of the first day we were fortunate enough to promote PTE Jeppesen to LCPL and LCPL Spain to CPL as well as present Australian Defence Medals to PTEs Blundell and Angus in front of friends and family. In addition to this the Battalion attended in numbers, the 42nd Infantry Battalion Mackay Branch re-union dinner which was a fantastic event where the Chief of Staff 11 BDE LTCOL Tina Close was the guest speaker. LTCOL Close's presentation highlighted the importance of determination and a fighting spirit in making your mark on the world. LTCOL Close is the living embodiment of this enlisting in the Army as a local Mackay girl who went on to have a rewarding and fulfilling military career having completed multiple deployments and postings to units in the 3rd Combat Brigade.

The following day saw the completion of the Exercise with guidance delivered and understood. The end state of the conference is that training next year will be better coordinated and supported through effective planning timelines, efficient allocation of resources and tasking of support staff from within the Battalion and Brigade. The conduct of the Exercise in Mackay is a sustain given its central location for all elements of the Battalion as well as the depot having the ideal infrastructure to support this type of activity. The next activity EX SECOND STEP will be conducted in Feb 2020.



## 2nd Division Command Conference

In early August the CO and RSM attended the Commander 2nd Division Command Conference conducted at Randwick Barracks Sydney. It was here that all Principle Staff Officers and Unit Command teams concentrated to receive the Comd 2 Div's guidance. It was during these presentations (in particular the G4) where we were fortunate to receive public recognition to the entire division for our persistence in requesting mission essential equipment to demonstrate Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capability. We weren't sure if it was positive recognition, however, the CO and RSM took it as such.

At the conference all elements were broken up to comprise working groups to discuss issues pertinent to the 2nd Division with a view to ensuring that we remain ready, reliable and relevant within the ADF. Again this was another opportunity for command teams to network and discuss common issues in the conduct of daily unit operations.

At the completion of the conference the CO and RSM were fortunate enough to bring back with them a bonus "lurgy" aka Flu bestowed on them by the generous members of an unnamed 11 BDE Southern Battalion who didn't want to pass up an opportunity to share. The "So What" of the conference is that the Division Commander wants us to get out there and be involved in the community to grow our units and capability. Additionally Force Generation for FY20/21 will be a Div effect and we must live within our resource allocations.

**LTCOL D Green**

## Capricornia Company

**OC Cap Coy**

Team, once again I would like to start with huge thank you to the soldiers, NCOs, SGTs, Warrant Officers and Officers of Capricornia Company for their efforts & their dedication to duty over 2019. In addition I would also like to acknowledge and thank the families for their support that fundamentally underpins the personnel of the company and keeps the company efforts & endeavours successful. Finally I would like to thank all the ARA staff that keep all the administration and training ticking over.

This year we farewell SGT Dave Coulter and welcome in SGT Mike McCulloch to the role of Gladstone TRG SGT. I would like to acknowledge SGT Coulter's efforts and hard work at Capricornia Company during his time at 31/42 RQR. In addition, we (the Coy) wish you all the best on your new posting to CTC Jungle Wing Tully - ("Tully - A pretty wet place").

I look forward to working with you all again in the New Year, so stay safe & drive safe over the holidays. Merry Xmas and a Happy New year to all.

Regards,

**MAJ R Grant**

## 21C Cap Coy

The momentum and focus has continued through the calendar year with the Company achieving desired training and governance outcomes. With several members completing promotion courses as well as a few opportunities for specialist training Capricornia continues to develop its soldiers and capabilities.

Members have also been dispersed far and wide participating in Brolga Run, numerous sub-unit training activities and also providing several reinforcements to attend the next rotation of Rifle Company Butterworth.

Of course all this would not be possible without the tireless efforts of the support staff to be able to facilitate and coordinate all the necessary requirements to make this happen. Even with a few speed humps along the way everything that has been asked has been actioned accordingly with Capricornia continually providing the desired outcomes in both training and administration.

As the year draws to a close people are looking forward to a well-deserved break, however there will still be members providing support to activities and training. There will also be preparation for possible DACC tasking's with the recall register and emergency equipment being readied. All should have a good holiday and be ready to meet the challenges of 2020 refreshed and good to go.....

Semper Paratus Defendere - Cede Nullis

## LT S Wooler



## TRG WO Capricornia Coy

This year has been non-stop, moving from one activity to another. It has seen our company members achieve great results in a wide range of areas, in particular courses, training activities, exercises, recruiting, Mil skills and ceremonial. Some of the particular highlights were; winning the Battalion Military skills competition, providing some good quality training for the new ISR patrols during EX Brolga Run and sending 3 x soldiers to Malaysia with 5 BDE.

During the year we have had the great honour of promoting a number of our soldiers, these include: LCPL Levi Davenport to CPL, LCPL Peter Spain to CPL, PTE Simon Jeppesen to LCPL & PTE Mathew Worley to LCPL. We hope that the level of strong leadership in the company continues and that our soldiers seek future promotion courses in order to rise through the ranks to take up positions that are vacant and they deserve.

Sadly this year we say farewell to one of our longest standing members of the unit SGT David Coulter, who joined the ARES in Jun 1998 with the 42nd Battalion before its amalgamation with the 31st Bn in 2009 to become the 31st/42nd BN ROR where David has remained until the end of this year. He changed over to ARA in 2018 with his first posting leaving him in location and will now move onto Combat Training Centre Jungle Training Wing Tully in 2020 which we know he will succeed in due his to excellent achievements and thorough knowledge in a wide range of skills that can only benefit any unit he is posted to. On behalf of the OC and all the company members we wish you great success in your future endeavours and hopefully one day you will be back to take the TRG WO chair.

My posting here has been amazing, I have the best soldiers any unit would fight to get, they continue to impress me daily with their continued support to activities, governance, recruiting and other miscellaneous tasks that crop up quite regularly and without their help I would have been in a mental asylum a long time ago. I also thank the employers of these soldiers who we often forget about, as without them releasing their employers to support our activities we wouldn't be the successful team we are today. In closing I wish you all a wonderful Christmas & Happy New Year and hope to see your smiling faces in 2020.

**WO2 P Lergessner**

#### 4 Platoon

The remainder of the year has been reasonably quiet with primary focus towards the unit's involvement in Exercise Brolga Run which has seen PTE Clement deploy as part of CT Alpha in the Battlegroup. The members of the depot have participated in other unit training with expected max attendance for the final November training weekend and we have seen two new members march in as qualified infantry with numerous others in the training pipeline who we will hope to welcome into the unit next year. As my last year as posted Training Sergeant to Gladstone and the unit it is a bittersweet parting however I wish everyone the best for the future and will be handing over to SGT Michael McCulloch who returns in January 2020 as the Training Sergeant at Gladstone for a 3 year posting.

**SGT D Coulter**

#### 5 Platoon



We have continued to push through to the final weeks of 2019. We had excellent training opportunities with Brolga Run, where we supported the Combat Teams within the battlegroup to conduct training within the STIX lanes. This included exposure to Protected Mobility Vehicle (PMV) manoeuvre, Obstacle Breaching, and Urban Clearances. Brolga Run 2019 sets the stage for Hamel 2020 and was an opportunity to learn and reinforce our training.

Members have supported Talisman Sabre recruiting activity, completed the RP3A Range Shoot, and the August ISR training weekend. There has been continued outstanding dedication from our members to 5 Platoon & 31/42 RQR which continues to drive us and Capricornia Company.

Our morale adds to our strong capability. I continue to advocate that our NCO's are second to none. The November urban scenario's and training run recently was outstanding and an excellent opportunity for our Platoon.

ISR has continued to focus on training and development of their Skills. PTE Mason successfully attended the 1RAR Basic Recon Course (gaining a good result and recommendation) and will return to support others with his new learnt skills.

Christmas will give us a good time to reflect and recoup for 2020.

**LT Evans**



Honorary Colonel of the Royal Queensland Regiment  
Brigadier Bruce Scott, CSC  
visits the 31/42 RQR Rifle  
Platoon chasing shade during  
Exercise Brolga Run 2019.

## 6 Platoon

Well the second half of the year kicked off and we were under the pump with Mackay hosting the Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) for Ex Talisman Sabre. This provided an excellent opportunity for some of the lads to get some hands on experience. The depot housed 120 personnel from the Special Air Services Regiment (SASR) and the 2nd Commando Regiment (2CDO).

This was followed up with Ex First Step, which saw command teams from across the Battalion here for the weekend to conduct planning for the next 12 months.

In August, we conducted a Multi Rotor Unmanned Aerial System operator course (MRUAS). This enabled us to enhance our ISR Section's capability. The MRUAS is used to collect video and still imagery and to provide situational awareness on a target area.

In September we travelled to Townsville for the Battalion Military Skills competition, and finished with impressive results with composite teams consisting members from Gladstone and Mackay we managed to cross the line with second place, with the lads from Rocky taking the Cup with first.



*A rare picture of ISR Platoon members conducting a listening post.*

Our efforts quickly shifted to focus on preparation for Ex Brolga Run held in Townsville Field Training Area (TFTA). The first half of Brolga Run provided excellent training opportunity for RSI to work together to hone their skills and drills, culminating in live fire patrol withdrawal range practices. The second half saw RSI move back to Lavarack Barracks to be reunited with the rest of the Battalion as part of the Combat Team.

## SGT Marks

### 42<sup>nd</sup> AIB Association - Rockhampton



The 42nd AIB annual reunion was a success again this year. Numbers were about average with some old faces reappearing for the first time in years. Representatives from kindred associations were in attendance to celebrate our history and renew acquaintance. The representatives from the two local councils both reinforced their continued support of the association. A most enjoyable evening was had by all.

The erection of a plaque to the Battalion at Wreck Point on the Capricorn Coast inches closer with the receipt finally of the plaque from the foundry. The current disastrous fires on the Capricorn Coast have held up discussion the Livingstone Shire council on a suitable time frame for the dedication and unveiling. I doubt it will now happen before the next year. The Wreck Point area is of historical significance to the Battalion and to Central Queensland as this was the area the Battalion utilised for many of its training activities between both World Wars. The area was also where the Battalion staged on mobilisation to commence training before moving to the Townsville area for jungle training en route to New Guinea and the South West Pacific campaign of WWII.

Mr Darryl Prizeman



## President 42nd AIB Association Rockhampton



### 42<sup>nd</sup> AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION

Central Queensland's Own

In the period prior to the Second World War, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion camped and trained in the vicinity of Cooe Bay and Wreck Point. With the outbreak of the war the Battalion trained extensively in this area prior to departing on operations in the South West Pacific campaign.

During the War the Battalion served in New Guinea and Bougainville from 1943 to 1945. The 42<sup>nd</sup> and other Battalions of the 29<sup>th</sup> Brigade served continuously on operations in New Guinea for 18 months.

The Battalion saw First World War active service from 1916 to 1918 in France and Flanders as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division.

LEST WE FORGET



*The President of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIB Assoc Mr Daryl Prizeman and the Treasurer of the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIB Assoc LTCOL John Phelan (retired) at the entrance to the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIB Assoc Annual Dinner.*



MAJ Ed Dahlheimer, WO2 Dean Schmidt & LT Wooler at the 42nd AIB Assoc Annual Dinner.



*The Head Table inc the Mayor Mrs Margaret Strelow & husband, Mr Darryl Strelow at the 42nd AIB Assoc Annual Dinner*

## CQ Military Ball - DRSC Awards 2019

The event was hosted back in Rockhampton for 2019 and received well by old and new. With over 140 people attending it was a great time to catch up with old friends and members as well as introduce some new people to the activity.

Although a semi-formal event the opportunity is never missed for all to turn out in their finest. During the course of the evening several long term members from different Corps were farewelled and also the chance to recognise employers of reserve members for their continued support to their staff in the form of the DRSC awards.

### Certificates

- Small business - All Wayz Concreting – Mr Glen & Mrs Pam Stack – CPL Adam West
- Public - QLD Corrective Services – Capricornia Correctional Centre - Mrs Alexis Livingstone – CPL Aaron McCosker & PTE Wayne Drage
- Public - Gladstone Regional Council – Ms Anna Scott – MAJ Ed Dahlheimer

### Trophies

- Small business - Capricorn Communications – Mr Eric Gill – PTE Joshua Studdert
- Medium - Mining Equipment Maintenance – Ms Chelsea Stirling – PTE Matthew Stanke
- Public - Mackay Base Hospital – Ms Nikki Smith – LT Steven Davey
- Not For Profit - Central Queensland University – MR Ron Tollasepp - SGT Stephen Oberg

Although the current format is changing the DRSC has provided support to employers and members alike over the years and have also supported the unit with numerous activities.

The outstanding entertainment was provided by the 1 RAR band who also took the opportunity the



following day to support Vietnam Veterans Day at the Cockcomb Retreat (which was also supported by Capricornia with a Guard and Guest Speaker). All in all a good night was had with future support to continue to these and similar events. Looking forward to the 2020 Ball which is hopefully supported and run in Mackay to share the love across the region....

**LT S Wooler**

## 42nd AIB Association – Mackay Branch Reunion Dinner 27th July



This year the 42nd Battalion Infantry Association Mackay Branch Reunion dinner coincided with the 31/42 ROR Battalion 1st step exercise held in Mackay which allowed 20 + of the Battalion members from across the AO to attend and participate and carry on the lineage and traditions of the 42nd Battalion.

Earlier in the day the CO had the pleasant task of promoting and recognising Mackay member's achievements with their family members watching on. Promoted LCPL to CPL Spain and PTE to LCPL Jeppesen, and presented the Australian defence medal to PTE Blundell and PTE Angus. The CO commented that the defence medal recognised a member's commitment to the defence of Australia and meeting their obligations to defence by rendering effective service for four years, and good leadership starts by leading by example.

The reunion dinner was run as a semi-formal affair with the normal formalities expected at a defence dinner except for the addition of a lucky door prize and raffles, some won by the present day members, for me it is always a great chance to catch up with people I have served with over the last 30 years.

I really enjoyed the guest speaker on the night LTCOL Tina McBride Chief of Staff 11 Brigade, who is the niece of the association President CPL Gary Edwards (and my first section commander).



*The present and future command group of the Mackay depot Left - Right  
SGT Oberg, CPL Zahra, LCPL Prior, CPL Spain, PTE Abela, PTE Angus, LCPL Cox, LCPL Jeppesen*

LTCOL McBride spoke about her military career, the highs and lows from being nicknamed "combat barbie" during basic training (not so PC today), to deploying on active service and also serving in an infantry battalion. I took two messages from this speech, never take no for an answer and that LTCOL McBride always seemed to have a mentor, even if they did not know it at the time. Back to the CO's comments earlier in the day you never know who is watching you to learn from the way you conduct yourself.

The evening finished with some of the old diggers singing a few old war favourites, I can see some of our current team replicating this in another 40 years. An excellent evening overall and I look forward to the next reunion dinner on the 25th July 2020.

**SGT Oberg**

## CPL F.S Deal MM Soldiers Club: Best on ground

There was an unusual amount of movement afoot at Mackay's typically sleepy CPL F.S. Deal MM Club on 10th July. Although a mustering of the club's members for a State of Origin decider is not uncommon, the function held that evening was of a scale rarely witnessed so far removed from the mysterious 'Big Army'. Komiatum Barracks played host to a large contingent of Australian Army and US Marine trainers and role-players, present in support of Exercise Talisman Sabre.

The prospect of such large, ravenous crowds was taken as an opportunity to raise the standard of the Club's usual catering efforts. PTE Woods, with assistance of committee members, supplied a trailer-mounted meat smoker, and spent the better part of the day preparing and tending to 100kg+ of beef, pork, lamb, chicken wings and vegetables. The aroma of woodsmoke and roasting meats drew in a very large crowd for the game, with some members travelling from as far afield as distant Proserpine to sample the exotic fare.



Two TVs were set up for the night, with the Club's indoor and outdoor areas filling to capacity. The Club had recently introduced a card reader for cashless transactions, as well as a special stock of energy drinks to cater for the special dietary requirements of the US Marines. Although the game's result was a disappointment for those hoping to witness yet another Queensland triumph, the event was a thorough success by any measure, whether that be a measure of noise, attendance or sheer consumption.

**LCPL Brendan Cox (PMC)**



## Kennedy Company

The second half of 2019 has seen Kennedy Coy busily continue with training across our regular Tuesday night parades, weekends and attendance on Exercise Brolga Run with the Coy contributing personnel into the Battle Group Headquarters, an Infantry Platoon and the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Platoon as well as running planned training at TFTA with members travelling away to undertake promotion and career development courses as required.

As the year ends we farewelled WO2 Scott 'Tas' Booker and SGT Alex Bashford who post to 51 FNQR and WONCO-TSV respectively and will welcome their replacements in the New Year. These hard working members contributing greatly to the Coy and fittingly were farewelled at Jezzine Barracks prior to a social function to end the year on our last training weekend.

We look now to be ready for the High Risk Weather season, staying safe over the Christmas and New Year Break and preparing for 2020, the year where we will participate in Exercise Hamel alongside 3 Bde at TFTA.

To everyone all the best for your Christmas break with family and friends.

**MAJ M Lalor**

### Support Task for the North Queensland Cowboys

31/42 RQR regularly benefits from a community partnership between the North Queensland Cowboys and the Australian Defence Force. A Kennedy Coy Flag Party led by CPL John Howe attended the Cowboys vs Rabbitohs game on Saturday 20 July. With nearly 17000 people in the crowd, CPL Howe's team put on a faultless display supporting recognition of our flag and national anthem. After completing their official duties the team retired to the corporate box to watch the game in unaccustomed comfort. Being a Cowboys fan, CPL Howe reports that he was "utterly devastated" when his team went down 18-30 to the South Sydney Rabbitohs. He was reported to have said, "What silly bugger would follow the Rabbitohs anyway?"

### IMT Training Weekend

BROLGA RUN was scheduled to be the most significant event of 2019. So, after the Platoon Warfighter activities conducted at the start of the year, Kennedy Company ran a confirmatory infantry minor tactics (IMT) exercise in August. The emphasis was on ambushing and navigation but a supporting effort was Intelligence, Surveillance and Recon tactics. NCOs were also tested at prepping and delivering orders.

The diggers were able to hone skills and benefited from the direction of WO2 Booker, SGT Bashford and CPL Redman. Even two Queensland University Regiment (OUR) recruits joined us to gain an introduction into what we do. The recruits received some introductory training, donned enemy uniforms, bombed themselves up with ammo and water and marched off accompanied by the TRG WO. Soon after, they valiantly marched into one killing ground after another and proceeded to die horrible deaths from a fusillade of blank fire. We gratefully acknowledge the support of OUR and look forward to welcoming PTEs Singh and Stauder once their training is complete



Thanks also must go to the ever-reliable Q staff represented by SGT Jacobsen and PTE Budd who as usual were on the ground setting up before everyone arrived and were the last to leave.



## Radio Training



Over the course of several weekends, members of Kennedy Coy participated in radio training with the Harris multiband UHF/VHF radio. For most, it was a refresher but a few members haven't been introduced to this smaller, lighter and much more capable digital kit. A bacon and egg barbecue brekkie was put on as an enticer and to make the early start a little more tolerable. The early start was planned to minimize time away from family on yet another weekend. The training covered basic RATEL, maintenance and start-up procedures. Later, we covered more complex functions such as enabling mission plans and establishing secure comms. The training resulted in improved cooperation between us and 141 Sig Squadron which came in really handy later on during BROLGA RUN.

## Support to Cadets (27 September)

On the 27th September during the school holidays, the Company supported the Australian Army Cadets (AAC) Brigade who sought range safety staff for the conduct of their annual range practice. It is absolutely in our own best interest to support AAC as a welcome source of future recruits. The Company supplied CPL Matysek and LCPL Anderson from Cairns along with CPL Pearson and PTE Bickle from Townsville. Additionally, Capricornia Coy (Mackay) provided LCPL Jeppesen. BHO was represented by WO2 Law. Other 11th Brigade units and even 3rd Bde's 4 Field Regiment also provided staff. Planning indicated that range practices were likely to last well into the afternoon but the firers and safety supervisors did such efficient work that the whole event was complete by lunchtime. Over ten thousand rounds were sent down range in a safe and orderly manner by one hundred and fifty two cadets who clearly enjoyed the experience. The AAC hierarchy and the 11 Brigade OIC Practice voiced their gratitude to the Battalion.

## Cove Talk

On 19th November, members of Kennedy Coy participated in a Cove talk ([cove.army.gov.au](http://cove.army.gov.au)) at the Lachlan Wilson Centre. Units from across Australia watched Commander 2 DIV MAJGEN Kathryn Campbell lead a professional discussion on amongst other things, the role of junior leaders in growing 2 DIV's capability. MAJGEN Campbell was very keen that all soldiers have the opportunity to spend "time in teams" which re-enforced the lessons from Brolga Run. She also talked up the opportunities for Reservists within the Chief of Army's Total Force concept. MAJGEN Campbell encouraged senior Privates, JNCOs and LTs to seek advancement and accept promotion to address hollowness in the force. Procedures are being implemented to grow the reserve force by one to two thousand additional positions. This was the first time in many years that soldiers have had the opportunity to ask questions of such a senior leadership figure. The opportunity certainly led to increased understanding and some insights into the causes of the changes that affect us.

## Exercise Brolga Run

31/42 RQR has been directed to generate an ISR element and a rifle platoon as part of Battle Group Cannan. Kennedy Coy raised this capability and tested our soldiers during 2019's major activity, BROLGA RUN. Building on a series of training events earlier in the year, BR19 provided a gauge for measuring soldiering skills at the individual level all



the way up to a culminating Company attack. This year it was particularly hard yakka. 13th Brigade (from WA) got introduced to Townsville's weather during a sweltering couple of weeks. We had planned to deploy the Combat Teams to High Range but our Platoon had to be relocated to Mount Stuart Training Area (MSTA) due to fire risk. Quite a few guys from WA and even some from



NSW had trouble acclimatising to the heat. The Loggies and Medics were kept busy dispensing water and electrolytes. Fortunately, our platoons were well led by LT Clyde-Smith and LT Evans and none of our guys and girls had to be removed from the field due to heat. As a result of the conditions, we got access to heavy transport assets like the Protected Mobility Vehicles (PMVs) and the brand new 40 Mike trucks. The culminating activity saw our soldiers conducting a combined arms assault in support of M1 Abrams tanks.



The end-of-ex function was held in the Jimmy Gordon VC club with over 500 very thirsty soldiers. Admittedly, it started with a few 'technical issues' involving extremely long lines to the bar, a false start and then a sudden STOP, STOP, STOP so the Battle Group CO could address the masses. Fortunately, soon after that, the music re-started, the bar re-opened and some well-deserved beverages were sent down-range. Thanks very much to the crew that volunteered (or got volunteered) to be duty officers and bar staff so that everyone else could enjoy themselves. There may have been a few sore heads but the next day saw the major transport movements to get people on to planes and buses back home.

### November Training Weekend



The final training weekend of the year saw a good crowd move down from Cairns on their usual late Friday night drive. Saturday was spent almost entirely in the Weapons Training Simulation System (WTSS). We covered off on the usual Army Individual Readiness Notice (AIRN) compliance shoot and then moved through the latest range practices utilizing Combat Behaviours. Then a section at a time defended an open beach from a dozen landing craft and an amphibious

company. Target indications roared out at maximum volume whilst heavy indirect fire rained down creating craters and giving the enemy cover. The simulation was realistic. The sections then split into bricks and spent the last couple of hours practicing All Arms Call For Fire (AACFF). Targets varied from a convoy of trucks, an isolated armoured vehicle, a single jeep through to SCUD missile launchers. Skills were a little rusty to start but within minutes enemy vehicles were exploding into flame after High Explosive rounds were adjusted accurately onto targets.



After dismissal, the troops were given an hour to change into civies so we could farewell those members posting out. Meeting up outside Jezzine Museum, MAJ Lalor delivered his appreciation for the efforts of WO2 Booker, SGT Bashford and SGT Edwards and presented them each with a plaque. Then, we moved down to the waterfront and “held ground” on all the front tables for a good meal and a few drinks.



Sunday morning saw the Q store issuing our red guns and we moved down to 3 Combat Engineering Regiment’s PT area. There, under the instruction of WO2 Taylor and SGT Benfield, the troops yelled, thrust, slashed and stabbed their way through bayonet training.

The final activity of the day was a swim test, equipment floatation and river crossing training conducted at the Lavarack Barracks pool.

### PTE Ken Bickle

Thanks to all the soldiers who keep turning up regularly week after week. Welcome to those new members marching in early in the New Year and best of luck to those who moved away due to work and study. We hope you all have an enjoyable, restful silly season with good food and accompanied by good friends and family.

### Coy HQ



## DRSC – Far North Old Employer Support Awards - Cairns



On the 19 Sep 19 the Far North Queensland chapter of the Defence Reserves Support Council held their Employer Support Awards at HMAS Cairns. The awards presented were in recognition of the support given to ADF Reserve members by their respective civilian employers.



PTE Brett Jorgensen of Kennedy Coy Cairns nominated his civilian employer, Michael Jorgensen of Mick Jorgo Plumber and Gas Fitter. This was for an award in the category of small private business. It was recognised that Michael had been more than accommodating in permitting the release of his employee for reserve service purposes. Additionally, PTE Jorgensen was released to complete an Accelerated Training Option (ATO) in which the member was unavailable for a period of 113 days. This was additionally commendable because PTE Jorgensen was also finalising his training as an apprentice plumber. Michael Jorgensen was

presented with the award by CO 31/42 RQR as the runner-up of his nominated category. The award reads “in recognition of your continued support of the Australian Defence Force Reserves”. Congratulations Michael and thank you for your generosity and sacrifice to Defence; PTE Jorgensen is a dutiful soldier who parades very regularly and attends most training weekends and major exercises.

The awards night was well attended by members of the Navy and 51 FNOR; a good presence was also had by key staff of the 31/42 RQR. The beers flowed freely, the canapés were delicious and a good time was had by all.

SGT Marshall

## DRSC – North Qld Employer Support Awards - Townsville

On 28<sup>th</sup> November DRSC conducted the NQ Employer Support Awards held at Rydges Southbank. The awards recognised the contributions of businesses and industry that have supported the ADF by releasing their employees who are Army Reservists to attend exercises, training or deploy on operations. Guest speaker for the evening was COL David Burke who has had a long and distinguished Regular Army Career. COL Burke is now a reservist and as busy as ever utilising his experience in his new civilian career.. In attendance was also COMD 11Bde BRIG D. Thomae and Mayor Charters Towers, the Hon. Liz Schmidt.



Category	Company	ADF member	Employer
Small Business	Aust Expedition Vehicles	CPL B. Siebert	Mr Michael McMillan
Medium Business	Old Sugar Limited	CAPT J. Pavetto	Mr James Formosa
Large Business	Asahi Beverages	CPL J. Howe	Mr Cameron Bird
Not for Profit	Stanton Lodge	CPL S. Edwards	Mr Kevin Butler
Public Organisation	Mundingburra OPS	CPL L. Starkey	Senior SGT Paterson
Cert of Appreciation	Old Corrective Services	SGT G. Lowien	Mr Andrew Wright
Cert of Appreciation	Woolworths Vincent Store	PTE J. Lawler	Mr Jason Brosnan
Cert of Appreciation	James Cook University	PTE R Nelson	Ms Sandra Dash
Cert of Appreciation	Kirwan Police Station		
Cert of Appreciation	Townsville City Council		

## Kennedy Regiment Commemorative Service 2019



On Sunday the 18 August 2019 the 31st and 42nd Infantry Battalion Association's conducted the Kennedy Regiment Commemorative Service at the St James Cathedral in Townsville. The service which is held annually was conducted by the Dean of St James Cathedral, The Very Reverend Canon Rod MacDonald with Association representatives and current serving members assisting.

The occasion is a significant event on the Battalion calendar therefore the Regimental Colours of the 31st / 42nd Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment were on display thanks to the pre-positioning by WO1 Ashley Barker (S7), MAJ Ian Reid (XO) and members of Kennedy Coy.

The Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major both were in attendance having only just returned from the Central Queensland Ball that was held in Rockhampton the night before with members of Capricornia Company. This meant an early start and the first flight out of Rockhampton in order to attend the service. Both made it in time thanks to a quick change into service dress in the airport carpark on the way to the church.

This year the guest of honour was MAJOR Kaho Lai who is the Officer Commanding the Army School of Transport - Maritime Wing. MAJ Lai was also invited to give the Reflections Address.

The Service was very poignant and the Reflections Address gave the congregation time to reflect on the Battalions history, its current and previous members including those that served in peace time and times of war and the hardships that were faced by the men of the Regiment in the past.

Also, as part of the service representatives from local government, associations, family and friends were invited to lay wreaths in memory of those that had gone before. The Commanding Officer laid a wreath on behalf of the Officers and Soldiers of the Battalion and PTE Ken Bickle of Kennedy Company did a reading of the Poem "Shed thou no tears" and the Regimental Sergeant Major recited "the Ode" and the congregation paused for a minute's silence.

At conclusion of the service those that had gathered enjoyed morning tea in the church before the 31st Battalion Association reconvened at the Townsville Yacht Club for lunch.

Overall the Kennedy Regiment Commemorative Service for 2019 was a great success. Occasions such as this help bridge the past and present members of the Battalion and maintain some of the unit's customs and traditions.

In the future the Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major hope that more members of the Battalion will be able to attend and with a little luck and a lot of rehearsals one day see the Colours marched into the Church which would be fitting for the occasion.

**RSM. WO1 Stafford**

## BATTLE OF FROMELLES Commemorative Service



On 19 July 2019 the RSM and I flew to Brisbane to attend the 31st Battalion Association's Commemoration of the 103rd Anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles which was conducted at the Graveside of LT Arthur Adams, DCM located in Ipswich Cemetery. I would like to congratulate the President of the 31st Infantry Battalion Association Brisbane Branch Ray Fogg and their members on such a well planned and executed activity. I would also like to thank the association for inviting us to attend such an important occasion.

Below is the address I delivered at the commemoration that provides a little perspective on why this battle is so important.

At around 1800h on Wednesday 19 July 1916, in full daylight on a clear sunny day, the 5th Australian

Division answered the call to attack and was thrown against the German front line as a diversion to help support the massive British offensive then in the balance at the Somme. The location of this diversion was 16km from the industrial city of Lille, between the Fauquissart-Trivelet Road and Cordonneri Farm, an area overlooked from Aubers Ridge to the South. The ground was low lying and much of the defensive fortifications by both sides consisted of building breastworks rather than trenches. The Enemy consisted of the 6th Bavarian Reserve Division supported by the two flanking Divisions of the German 6th Army. In the ranks of the enemies 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment at Fromelles was a young dispatch runner named Adolf Hitler who, during the battle, faced the direct fire of advancing Australians in the conduct of his duties.

At that time the 5th Australian Division comprised of the 8th, 14th and 15th Infantry Brigades each, in turn were made up of four battalions and support troops. The 8th Bde (drawn from SA, WA, Qld and Vic) comprised the 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd Battalions; 14th Bde (NSW) the 53rd, 54th, 55th, and 56th Battalions and 15th BDE (Vic) the 57th, 58th, 59th and 60th Battalions. The 31st Battalion comprised approximately 1000 men broken up into four companies A and B Coy from Queensland and C and D Coy from Victoria. In the assault the 8th Brigade who were the left assault Brigade would have two Battalions forward 32nd (left) and 31st (on the right) Battalions, with one battalion carting stores and ammunition to the attacking troops and another battalion held in reserve.

The objective in this particular phase of the battle was to cooperate with the 61st British Division to attack the Sugarloaf salient of the German front. The enemy had prepared their position well with the diggers observing from the other side of No Man's Land the foreboding German defensive line, all concrete and bristling with barbed wire up on high ground out to the horizon. The flat featureless no-man's land varied in width from more than 350m in front of 15 BDE on the right to around 100m on the Australian left flank 8 BDE. Many of the communications trenches to the rear of the Australians which was the source of their ammunition, supplies and reinforcements, were impassable due to flooding or knee-deep mud.

Preceding the assault was a seven-hour bombardment of preparatory fire commencing at 11am 19 July 1916 which continued throughout the afternoon. This bombardment and all subsequent were expected by the high command to destroy the enemy's defences and wire entanglement enabling the soldier to simply move in and occupy the German lines with minimal effort or loss. The British bombardment did not go unanswered by the Germans who retaliated in kind by shelling the rear communication trenches and reserve troops. It was in one of the early salvos where the 31st's ammunition and bomb dump was blown up and many casualties sustained including BHO and medical staff. Only through the valiant efforts of the battalion's bomb throwers clearing the burning boxes was half of the ordnance saved.

As the artillery fire intensified the Germans understood what was about to occur and prepared to repel an assault by occupying their hardened defensive positions accordingly. At 1732h it was H Hour and the first wave of the 31st and 32nd battalion moved bravely over the parapet to commence their assault over open ground covered by the enemies many mutually supporting Machineguns and artillery. The initial response from the Germans was murderous particularly from the flank where the British had not yet commenced their assault requiring the detonation of subterranean mine full of 1200 pounds of explosives to provide some protection for the Australians from the machinegun fire. As a result, the initial losses were heavy, however, the Battalions continued to advance and as they did, the enemy resistance appeared less intense. When the Australians reached the German parapet, they observed the enemy running away over open terrain to hold ground in the alleys and the dugouts to the rear. Close quarter combat ensued and the position was held by the Australians who captured 35 prisoners in the process of clearing the trenches.

This action created a foothold for the following waves to better move through "No-man's land" with the exception of Delangre farm on the extreme left flank from which there was no cover. Confusion over objectives saw the 32nd battalion commence an assault on the farm, but with no cover and fierce resistance the attack failed and the Battalion withdrew as the 31st Battalion pushed further ahead. In the fog of war with inaccurate sketch maps, poor communications, no cover, murderous machinegun fire by a strong well positioned enemy and a constant bombardment of indiscriminate friendly and enemy artillery causing enormous casualties the entire front line was spread thin and disjointed presenting huge gaps in the Australian and British front line.

Desperate attempts were made to regroup, close gaps, establish defensive structures to provide cover, regain communications and conduct resupply with minimal success whilst the dead piled higher. On the left flank the Bavarian Battalions could be seen assembling to conduct a counter-attack with the assistance of their flanking German units to recapture the positions the Australians now held. In the fading daylight they commenced a heavy attack which was repelled by the Australians utilising heavy rifle and machinegun fire supported by artillery. Unfortunately, the situation on the right flank was perilous due to key terrain remaining vacant after Australians continued their advance. The Bavarians from the Sugarloaf moved into this position and as they did the Australians mounted a desperate counter-attack which halted their progress but did not drive them out.

As darkness consumed the battlefield valiant attempts were made to hold ground using all available cover as well as the conduct of spoiling attacks on the enemy establishing positions that would endanger Australian efforts in completing their task. Just after 0200h 20th July 1919 the Bavarians launched another counter-attack which was more powerful than any before it which fell heavily on the right flank (31st Bn) which was all but cut off at this point. The protracted fighting throughout the day and night saw ammunition and provisions starting to run low increasing the amount of hand to hand fighting in pockets of the front. At 0530h the Bavarians commenced another attack heavily supported by bombing teams. With limited ammunition to repel this attack parties now began to return across no-man's land and the sector rapidly emptied with the action at Fromelles practically over.

The only measure of success from the battle was 8 and 14 Brigades capture of 1000 yards of enemy front-line system at the cost of 5513 casualties for the 5th Australian Division. This baptism of fire for 8 Brigade resulted in 1262 casualties with the 31st Battalion sustaining casualties consisting of 16 Officers and 528 men. This represented the most significant loss of life in one night in Australian History. Many soldiers from this battle were and still remain unidentified and buried in mass graves in proximity to where the fighting took place. It is largely thanks to the work of Lambis Englezos in finding and identifying Australian soldiers killed in the battle that this number is reducing as we gather. Today at Fromelles the headstones of seven Australian soldiers identified from the battle will be unveiled including two 31st Battalion members LCPL R Johnson and PTE L C Dunn.

In late 2010 after returning from operations in Afghanistan I toured the World War 1 battlefields with my wife and two daughters who at the time were aged 11 and 13. Prior to the trip my wife had just finished reading the book Fromelles written by Patrick Lindsay. The tragedy of this battle struck a chord with her which then ensured visitation of Fromelles became a priority.

After a long day in the car driving through the battlefields of France we arrived at Fromelles feeling tired and frustrated with the confines of a car. These feelings immediately disappeared as we stepped out to face the Pheasant Wood cemetery and memorial. The scale of everything really hit home when we were standing on the ground. Initially we thought we would be driving around to explore the entirety of the



battlefield but were quite shocked and amazed at how small the battlefield actually was. It was almost inconceivable to me that so many people could fit let alone fight in such a confined area.

As we looked around to observe the open ground, the German Defence's at the Sugarloaf and Delangre Farm we began to really understand how it was that so many soldiers died in that battle. The two mass graves at VC Corner in vicinity of the Cobbers memorial was the finishing touch causing us to culminate on our comprehension of the senseless loss of life that occurred on this day in 1916. After reviewing the



scene of the battle of Fromelles we paid our final respect to the fallen and completed the drive to Lille in utter silence as we reflected on what we had just seen.

The planning of the battle of Fromelles was bordering on criminal and the sheer arrogance of the high command in their assumptions and tactical decision making was even worse. This battle should serve as a stark reminder that thorough preparation and planning is the least we can do prior to committing troops to fight after diplomacy has failed. Many soldiers who survived Fromelles and the remainder of the war carried physical and mental scars when they returned home. Many of them never recovered from their wounds becoming casualties of war dying within years of the bells of Armistice sounding the Germans surrender.

Lest we forget.

**LTCOL Green.**

## **The 31st infantry Battalion Association Inc**

The 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion Association is seeking to grow its membership throughout branches located in Townsville, Ingham, Charters Towers and Brisbane. The Association provides a social support network for all current and former serving members of the 31st Battalion in all its forms including the 31st/42nd Battalion. For those interested in becoming a member there is a membership application attached in this newsletter. Our aim is also to preserve the memory and history of the Battalion in all its forms by commemorating significant actions on their anniversary.

This year the Association conducted re-union lunches in each of our locations as well as commemorating the Battle of Fromelles (19 July 1916), conducting the Kennedy Regiment Church Parade and laying wreaths on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

You can find out more information on the Association at [www.31bnassn.org](http://www.31bnassn.org)

### **VALE**

This year has unfortunately seen the loss of much loved members of the association and former members of the Battalion. These include:

On 5 February 2019 Kevin Claude Thomas, MM, a Korean War veteran with a distinguished military career with many units including 3 RAR, Commandos and 31 RQR sadly passed away.

Robert Edward (Bob) Wasley former National Serviceman, former member of the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion and member of the 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion Association passed away peacefully on Friday 1 March 2019 in Townsville aged 84.

Townsville 31st Battalion Association member and National Serviceman Ron Whiting passed away on 8 April 2019.

Patricia (Patsy) Hilary Gardner affectionately known throughout the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion family of members and their partners, in particular those of Charlie Company, for her contagious laugh and ever ready smile passed away peacefully on 1 May 2019. She was 84 years of age.

Noel Pilcher former member of the 31<sup>st</sup>/51<sup>st</sup> Battalion and World War Two veteran sadly passed away on 8 August 2019 in Bowen just one month short of his 99<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

On 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 the 31st Battalion Association Patron and former Battalion Commanding Officer Colonel Hugh Gaffney AM, RFD, ED sadly passed away. His funeral was attended by many friends and family including a large turnout of former Battalion members as well as the current CO 31/42 RQR.



**42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion  
Association Mackay Branch  
Membership / Update form**

Return to, PO Box 10047, Mount Pleasant Q 4740 or scan in & email to ... [garry\\_edwards53@hotmail.com](mailto:garry_edwards53@hotmail.com)  
0400 243 779

Your first name, middle initial, last name .....

Your partner/spouse name as above .....

Your current postal address .....

If moving soon, new address .....

Your preferred email address .....

Your mobile phone number (best for texts) .....

Otherwise your phone number .....

Are you moving before next year's reunion .... YES / NO

Were you in 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion / 9FD Ambulance / 31st/42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

Which company were you in .....

Do you wish to receive invitations to our reunions .... YES / NO

Which time for the reunion function is best for you – Saturday luncheon / evening

**SAVE THE DATE – SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2019 at 6PM – EVENING FUNCTION**

**President – Garry Edwards, Vice President – Michelle Furlong, Secretary – Liz Ward**



**42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion  
Association Rockhampton Branch  
Membership / Update form**

Return to: Mr T. Cordell, Hon Sec., P.O. Box 403, Rockhampton Q 4700  
Or scan in & email to ... [tcordell@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tcordell@bigpond.net.au) Ph. 0401 916 283

Your first name, middle initial, last name .....

Your partner/spouse name as above .....

Your current postal address .....

If moving soon, new address .....

Your preferred email address .....

Your mobile phone number (best for text).....

Otherwise your phone number .....

Are you moving before next year's reunion .... YES / NO

Were you in 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion / 9FD Ambulance / 31st/42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

Which company were you in.....

Do you wish to receive invitations to our reunions .... YES / NO

**President - Darryl Prizeman, Vice President - Robert Grant, Secretary - Ted Cordell**

**Annual Dinner/Luncheon Date is TBC**



**31<sup>st</sup> INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED**

**TOWNSVILLE BRANCH**

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP/ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GIVEN NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBURB: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENTLY SERVING: YES/NO UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_

RANK: \_\_\_\_\_ REGIMENTAL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

BRIEF RECORD OF SERVICE (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE OF \$20.00.**

**PAYMENT BY DIRECT DEBIT:** Either mail this completed form to the Secretary (address below), or scan and email to [gregory.stokie@bigpond.com](mailto:gregory.stokie@bigpond.com)

**Electronic Bank Details**

National Australia Bank

BSB: 084-766

Account Number: 57-874-2457

Account Name: 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion Association Inc Townsville.

Reference: Please ensure that you include your name.

**PAYMENT BY MAIL:** Cheque, Money Orders (Made out to 31<sup>st</sup> Inf. Bn. Assn. Inc.) or Cash may be enclosed with this application form and mailed to:

**The Secretary, 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion Association (Inc)**

**11 Azalea St, Aitkenvale QLD 4814**

**Phone (07) 47798002**