

CO'S 5 RAR REPORT



CO 5 RAR - LTCOL Paul Shields MBE

The Tiger Battalion has hit the ground running in 2017. After a well-deserved break over the holiday period, the Battalion returned to work in early January. Delta Coy who had remained in Darwin on call as the Ready Combat Team over the stand down period conducted a handover with Bravo Coy before departing on leave.

February saw the Battalion conduct Exercise Ready Tiger which consisted of a suite of courses to ensure those members who had posted in over Christmas were fully compliant with our Ready Battlegroup requirements. In a two-week period, the Battalion conducted Helicopter Underwater Escape Training, Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defence training, Public Population Control and First Aid courses. Exercise READY TIGER resulted in many individual qualifications being handed out.

Support Coy continues to grow for the future, currently Mortars, Direct Fire Support Weapons Platoon, Reconnaissance, Assault Pioneers and Signals Platoons are all running their basic courses as part of the first courses camp scheduled for this year. The Battalion has been lucky enough to share the load on some of these courses with our sister battalion 7 RAR. This has seen Mortars and Direct Fire Support Weapons Platoon deploy to Cultana to conduct their field training and live-fire components.

The Battalion took time to pause in February to reflect and remember the 50th anniversary of two significant Vietnam operations, Operation Beaumaris and Operation Renmark, both operations resulted in significant casualties for the Battalion. The Battalion will always remember the sacrifices made by its members both past and present.

As I write this the Battalion is about to head out the door to Townsville to participate in EX POLYGON. This exercise will see the Ready Combat Team and Battalion HQ deploy forward to Townsville from Darwin via RAAF KC30 to secure the air point of entry for follow on forces including 1 RAR and elements of the Amphibious Ready Element (2 RAR). This exercise will be a great opportunity for some of the junior commanders of the Battalion to really cut their teeth and gain some valuable experience, whilst demonstrating the Battalions capabilities to the 3rd Brigade.

Charlie Coy continue to provide excellent support to Task Group Taji 4 in Iraq. Their role providing training advisors and Force Protection Elements has been vital in supporting the Iraqi Security Forces in their battle against Daesh.

Army Headquarters is currently looking closely at the future structure of Army, and the Tiger Battalion is on the front foot in adaptation and modernisation. The Battalion will change from a Standard (Light) Infantry Battalion and motorise with integral Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicles (PMVs) as well as the new Land 121 Protected Logistics vehicles over the next 18 months. Bravo Coy will lead the charge, they have already receipted a Company's lift worth of Bushmaster and qualified their soldiers to operate the vehicles. The remainder of the Battalion will continue to develop and integrate the vehicles and capabilities with the plan to be fully motorised in late 2018.

As always, the Tiger Battalion continues to work hard, innovate and lead the way for the 1st Brigade.

LTCOL Paul Shields, MBE
Commanding Officer 5 RAR