

SUPPORT COMPANY REPORT

December 2017

DEFENCE FIRE SUPPORT WEAPONS SECTION

6th– 31st March, EX Polygon

64A was attached to Bravo Company during the conduct of Exercise Polygon, based in Townsville. Using our anti-armour suite of weapon systems including the Javelin 64A brought a decisive anti-armour capability which the commanding elements of Bravo Company employed to their maximum potential and lethality. Following the insertion into the Area of Operations (AO) utilising Multi-Role Helicopters 90 (MRH90) the company sized battlegroup advanced on foot to its first ground objective. Separating from the main element and utilising a section from bravo company to provide security 64A's mission was to establish Anti-armour ambush locations by night to interdict enemy BTR's (Armoured Personal Carrier) and BMP's (Infantry Fighting Vehicles) as well as provide observation posts to provide battle field commentary and forward screens for the rest of the command team. Throughout the conduct of the exercise 64A marched throughout the AO carrying in excess of 40kg and met its objectives on time and destroyed up to 12 enemy Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFV) allowing the rest of the battlegroup to secure their objectives on the ground without the threat of enemy armour suppressing their advance and provided effective battlefield commentary. 64A also helped friendly call signs to de conflict within the AO as well as guide these call signs to interdict enemy elements through use of the javelin Command Launch Unit (CLU) optic and Observation Posts (OP) This exercise saw some of the most challenging work for DFSW platoon this year, including heavy loads to be carried over great distances as well as meeting mission critical timings which the platoon excelled at. All in all this exercise was demanding and saw DFSW platoon grow in experience and capability. It is of note that both the Detachment (Det) commander CPL Allen and 2IC LCPL Roberts are to be highly commended for their work in adaptability to the chaotic nature of the tasking's as well as their ability to provide accurate information up the chain of command and utilise the sections capability for maximum effect on the ground.

19th – 29th May Exercise Southern Jackaroo

DFSW's second exercise for the year was a live fire activity where the platoon was given the opportunity to conduct platoon training independent of the rest of SPT and Rifle Coys. There was no tactical phase to this exercise as it planned to give the Battalion time to build up confidence and proficiency in live fire environment. We got great time on our tools, conducting practices of 12.7mm Heavy Machine Gun (HMG) gun lines and Extended Range Machine Gun (ERMG) as well as becoming qualified in the new Mk47 Automatic Grenade Launcher (AGL) system. The numerous day and night shoots greatly increased the Platoon's efficiency in the direct fire support role as well as boosting the unit morale and cohesion.

22nd June – 6th July Exercise Talisman sabre

DFSW was deployed as a platoon for exercise Talisman Sabre. 64 was tasked to provide an Extended Range Machine Gun (ERMG) and direct fire capability on the defensive position. 64 conducted fire missions utilising the 12.7mm and the Mk47 alongside the USMC Heavy Weapons call signs, enhancing multi-national capability and interoperability. Following a fire on the Mk47 gun line 64 caused by rifle company 84mm illumination rounds not hitting their mark, DFSW swiftly and professionally collapsed the line before the raging inferno could cause the 40mm ammunition to ignite and endanger our position further. Losing only one casualty, a Mk47 tarp, DFSW remained combat effective for the remainder of the exercise.

Following Exercise Talisman Sabre DFSW platoon was involved in the multi-national exercise Exercise Koolendong with the USMC and opposing elements of the French Armed Forces New Caledonia. Again the lads performed to a high standard reflecting the professionalism and hardworking ethos of the platoon.

Concurrently the platoon has had to provide members for short notice tasking and courses throughout the year in which the boys have excelled and brought back a greater capability to the platoon.

All in all it has been a challenging and strong year for the boys, with hard exercise and lads stepping up into command roles. Meeting each exercise head on DFSW platoon has grown as a battalion capability with the influx of new blood who are keen and eager to get the job done.

CPL Ethan Tocknell