



LTCOL CHRIS GILMORE

G'day Tigers,

It is a privilege to write to you for the last time to provide an update on what the Tiger Battalion has been up to for the past few months. Our Tigers have performed to an excellent standard on both Operations in the United Kingdom (OP KUDU) and at home through the execution of Exercise Predators Run 2023 and the completion of our Basic Support Company Course period.

Firstly, I would like to offer a warm welcome and introduce the Tiger community to the incoming Commanding Officer of the Battalion, LTCOL Hugh Grogan. LTCOL Grogan comes to the chair as call-sign 'India 9er' having served for over 25 years in the Royal Australian Regiment. He brings a wealth of experience with him, and it is also very pleasing to see that he and the Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 Brad Foster will reunite having previously served together as the Officer Commanding and CSM as a Company Command team. Personally, I have known Hugh for many years and there is not an officer better prepared or more suited to assume the role as the Commanding Officer of 5 RAR.

As always, the focus of the Tigers has been on training, and they have represented all Tigers past and present with a sense of purpose, humility and most of all, with focus on capability. Since I last wrote to you, Charlie and Delta Company participated in Exercise Predators Run 23, a littoral manoeuvre focused activity in and around Darwin and Melville Island. Bravo Company deployed to the United Kingdom for Rotation III of OP KUDU, training several hundred Ukrainian recruits to return to Ukraine and defend their homeland against Russian aggression. Support Company completed a number of courses to qualify the next generation of soldiers in the specialist skills required to keep the Battalion moving. Our Logistic Company have been working at 120% capacity, maintaining our Protected Mobility Vehicle fleet (Bushmaster), keeping our small boat capability on the water, receiving the first two Regional Patrol Craft (and adding to our capability on the water) and also receiving the first tranche of Supercat vehicles. As we currently stand, Charlie Company deployed off the line of march from Ex Predators Run to the United Kingdom for the fourth Rotation of Operation KUDU and we farewelled our brothers and sisters of the United States Marine Corps of this year's Marine Rotational Force – Darwin.

Exercise Predators Run 2023 was an opportunity for the 1st Brigade to test and evaluate the level of capability that we have been able to reach in our Littoral development over the past two years. As a brigade, we task organised into two multi-

national battle groups; BG TIGER with C Coy, an Indonesian Company from 412 Bn TNI-AD, an Engineer Squadron and Log Company. Delta Coy regrouped with a Company from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and an Engineer squadron under BG GOANNA and we commenced the exercise. We focused on moving across the water at distance, using both contracted civilian landing craft and our own small boats. The activity was tough and an immense amount of professionalism was needed from the Tigers, and as our teams always have, they stepped up to the challenge and moved to the point of friction. The exercise had some highs and lows; the low being the tragic loss of three of our U.S. Marine mates in the MV 22 incident on Melville Island, of which our Direct Fire Support Weapons Platoon supported the response to. The highs were many, however Delta Company's securing of strategic firing systems was exceptional, as were the efforts of Charlie Coy, covering more than 200 nautical miles over open water (including several night-time over the horizon) transits in a flotilla of small boats – a feat not conducted before on that scale by an RAR unit. The exercise concluded with a visit by Lt. Gen Maruli Simanjuntak, the current PANKOSTRAD and commanding General of the TNI-AD contingent that we had the privilege to host.

Our continued contribution to OP KUDU in the United Kingdom has continued to be a highlight of the year for the Tigers who have deployed to train the recruits of the Armed Forces of the Ukraine. In what has been a mission with much of the world watching, I cannot state how proud I am of the level of dedication, focus and professionalism all four of our contingents have displayed. In other regional operations, a platoon sized team from Delta Company deployed to Timor Leste for six weeks since I last wrote to you. Our Logistic Company and Motorised team lead the delivery of two Bushmaster driver training courses to the Indonesian Army, which in turn enabled the delivery of Bushmaster's donated to Indonesia by the Australian Government, inclusive of OC Log leading the team to receipt the vehicles in Indonesia.

Before I conclude, I would like to acknowledge the work of the men and women of the Tiger Battalion over the past two years. The Tiger Battalion has been heavily tasked, and the teams have always stood up to be counted; completing 13 separate security cooperation activities with near region partners, five separate named operations, three separate domestic operational deployments and 17 separate field training exercises and courses. The work of the unit's commanders, from Company to Fire Team has been the glue that has enabled the team to sustain such a tempo, and all of this could not have been achieved without the resolute support that WO1 Foster and WO1 Casey before him have provided the Battalion.

As I sign off, I will be forever grateful that I have had the opportunity to serve in this fine Battalion. To have served in the Tiger Battalion has been an absolute honour, and to have been a custodian of the Battalions Colours has been the most humbling experience of my career. I wish all Tigers out there a safe and Merry Christmas. Please continue to look out for each other as you always have and always do.

Duty First!

Chris Gilmore