

BRAVO COMPANY REPORT – DECEMBER 2024

This year has been a tumultuous journey for B Coy with an unbelievable amount of training, travel and international engagements. Whilst the highlight for the Company was deploying for four months on Rifle Company Butterworth 144 (RCB144), there was a significant amount of work that went into the lead up to the deployment and post the deployment. In the space of nine months, the Company achieved the following:

- Section & Platoon live fire exercises
- High Explosive range packages
- Five international deployments throughout South East Asia
- Three international engagement exercises
- Battlefield history tours – Four day Sandakan Death March
- Multiple Air Mobile Operations with foreign forces
- Platoon and Company sized jungle exercises
- Small boats training



The Great Bundeve Fire.

The year kicked off in spectacular fashion, with the individual training progression and upskilling on new equipment and ancillaries, and a quick turnaround seeing the first company activity at Kangaroo Flats Training Area. This field training activity saw the Company progressing through individual to section level live fire activities by day and night, in preparation for platoon live fire activities at the Mount Bundeve Training Area (MBTA).

The live fire activity at MBTA was a valuable training experience for the company. Over a two-week period, B Coy progressed through a HE package and platoon level live fire by day and night. After two weeks on the range, the soldiers had achieved what they needed to and decided it was time to return to base, not before burning the range to the ground. The only casualties were an 11x11 tent, a couple of stools and the Company's stock of soft drinks (RIP Goffers –See photo).

After a brief respite with friends and family, the Company deployed on RCB144 in May. The soldiers and officers of RCB144 adjusted extremely well to the tropical climate of Malaysia and after only five days in country, the Company deployed on its first jungle exercise, EX JUNGLE GENESIS. The exercise was planned and coordinated by the CHQ and involved training platoons in foundational jungle warfare. It wouldn't be a proper jungle exercise without tropical downpours, sweltering heat, opportune bathing in the local rivers followed by an inundation of leaches, Giant Asian Hornet attacks (this insect is nightmare material – Google it!), and of course getting a great night's sleep in platoon ambushes. A first exposure to living and fighting in the jungle for the majority of the Company, and no doubt a lot of valuable lessons were learnt extremely fast.

There was no time to revel in the successes of exercise, with only three days to conduct refit-to-fight before deploying from RMAF Butterworth via RAAF C-17 and RAAF C-130s to Sabah, Borneo. It was in Sabah where the next exercise was to occur, Ex KERIS STRIKE serial 29/2024. This exercise was a trilateral brigade level exercise between Malaysia, the United States and Australia. Highlights of the exercise were Air Mobile Operations in US CH-47s and interoperability activities including: Combat Shooting (led by B Coy), Urban Warfare Training (led by B Coy), live fire platoon attacks, cultural/sports integration and post-exercise KFC (morale!). Lowlights included: the accommodation (aptly named *Camp Paradise*), and Malaysian MOG rides (The MOG is not a watercraft). Overall, the exercise was a success and enabled us to build and enhance significant international relationships with the Malaysians and US.



Instant morale post-Exercise KERIS STRIKE.



Bravo Company on Ex KERIS STRIKE

The next part of our journey saw a small contingent of 20 personnel from the Company conduct the Mount Kinabalu climb. With an elevation of 4,095m, Mount Kinabalu is the highest mountain in South East Asia, and certainly put our people to the test with a rapid drop in temperature and steep climb to the top.

Whilst the mountain climbers were scrambling up goat tracks, the rest of us were prepping to conduct the Sandakan Death March. The march followed the same infamous trails of our own WWII Prisoners of War. On the journey we

visited Commonwealth grave sites, memorials and notable points along the track with significant historical meaning. The four-day march was extremely arduous, inspiring and humbling for all. For those who participated, the march will be forever be a lasting experience.

The Company then deployed from Borneo to Chiang Rai, Thailand. It was here we were able to experience the amazing hospitality of the Royal Thai Army for the conduct of EX CHAPEL GOLD 24. This bilateral activity between Australia and Thailand focused heavily on small team interoperability, building relationships through sports and cultural exchanges and of course the essential 'Jungle Survival Camp' experience. The soldiers learnt how to kill, prep and cook the local village chickens, eat a delicacy of insects and bugs and watch some overly-brave Thai soldiers handle King Cobras. The exercise concluded with series of company attacks in the jungle, and some well-earned cold beers that night.



Thai soldiers work with King Cobras.

With no rest for the wicked, we experienced another quick turnaround to deploy back to RMAF Butterworth to begin our final training activity. This activity training enabled the Company to qualify on a new suite of weapons systems, enhance their urban warfare knowledge and skills, upskill their medical training and importantly, qualify the JNCOs and PHQs on Small Boats training.



Sports and Culture training – Ex CHAPEL GOLD 24.

After almost four months, the only thing that was preventing B Coy from returning to Australia was the RAAF. You guessed it, our return was delayed for over a week, arriving back in Darwin in early September.

The next significant activity for B Coy will be EX TRIDENT, a bilateral exercise with the Singaporean Armed Forces in Shoal Water Bay Training Area, working with our regional partners.

It was definitely a busy year for the Company, with a bunch of support, promotion and short courses thrown into the mix.

Well done to all the Soldiers and Officers of Bravo Company. You have excelled throughout the whole year and represented the Battalion, the Regiment and yourself to the highest standard.

Duty First.

MAJ J Frisby