

SUPPORT COMPANY

DIRECT FIRE SUPPORT WEAPONS PLATOON

Building on the strong foundations and momentum established throughout 2024, the DFSW Platoon has once again affirmed its reputation as one of the most capable, professional, and adaptable platoons within 5th/7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (5/7 RAR), and across 1st Brigade. 2025 has proven to be a demanding yet immensely rewarding year, marked by operational excellence, individual growth, and collective achievement both domestically and abroad.



The year commenced at tempo, with 64E deploying in support of **Combat Team Charlie** for **Exercise Balikatan** in the Philippines. Operating alongside regional partners and the United States Marine Corps, the platoon delivered precision direct fire support in a complex and dynamic multinational environment. This deployment showcased the platoon's hallmark flexibility, technical mastery, and professionalism, reinforcing the integral role DFSW capability plays within the littoral combined arms framework.

Concurrently, the main body of the platoon conducted a rigorous training progression at Mount Bundy Training Area throughout April and May. A series of demanding section and platoon live-fire activities enabled crews to refine gunnery proficiency, enhance mounted and dismounted integration, and consolidate tactics, techniques, and procedures. These activities reinforced the high standards of discipline and technical excellence that have become synonymous with DFSW Platoon.

The platoon then transitioned into a series of major brigade-level exercises, including **Exercise Predators Run** and **Exercise Talisman Sabre**. During these activities, DFSW sections integrated with their respective combat teams, providing essential direct fire and anti-armour support during complex littoral operations. The platoon's ability to operate seamlessly alongside infantry, engineers and other combat support elements further demonstrated its operational agility and tactical value on the modern battlefield.



As the year progressed, DFSW elements continued to represent the battalion across a variety of operations and regional engagements. Deployments included support to **Combat Team Alpha** during regional cooperation training in **Malaysia**, and to **Combat Team Bravo** on **Operation Resolute**, where DFSW personnel contributed to the first-ever Army-led legislative forfeiture in the operation's history—an achievement that underscores the platoon's professionalism and operational competence. Additionally, the platoon supported the **Littoral Mentoring and Training Team** deployment to the



Philippines, where **Combat Team Charlie** worked closely with the Philippine Marines to develop and refine littoral standard operating procedures and tactics.

As 2025 draws to a close, the achievements of DFSW Platoon stand as a testament to the dedication, skill, and resilience of its soldiers and junior non-commissioned officers. Their unwavering professionalism and commitment to excellence continue to form the foundation of the platoon's success. This year has once again demonstrated that DFSW Platoon remains a formidable and indispensable capability within 5/7 RAR—**adaptive, proficient, and always ready for the next challenge.**

RECONNAISSANCE, SURVEILLANCE AND SNIPERS PLATOON

It has once again been a big year for RSS platoon. As the Battalion's most capable and sought-after platoon, there is never an opportunity to 'sit one out'. RSS has managed to maintain its own personal goals and training outcomes set early on in the year, whilst also supporting over 50 exercises and deployments both at home and overseas. Reference Tiger Tales from all of the other Companies, RSS was there providing valuable insight, prosecution and setting the conditions for them to leave the Line of Departure (which is 10-20kms behind us).



With ever changing and modernising battlespace environments, comes new abilities and technologies to employ. It is of course important to learn how to use these new pieces of equipment, but also to establish ways of employing them effectively to aid the battalion. More of the platoon than ever is qualified to operate our expanding fleet of drones and during our regular ATL progression exercises (Ex Goat Blast and Ex Stealth Surge) there was extra focus on employment of this new capability.

Not only do new technologies increase our lethality, they also present problems with facing this threat from the enemy. Adjusting our SOPs and tactics to face these new threats was also a focus on this training. Enemy drone threats and increasing thermal capabilities are things that we introduced into our training during the early part of the year.

During our regular ATL progression, we also conducted the first live-fire break contacts by night that the platoon has done in recent history, showing that capability at the individual soldier level extends well past last light and into the cover of darkness. The confidence required in each patrolman to be able to successfully achieve this, speaks volumes of the skill and discipline of each man.



When required to be the most forward soldiers in the battlespace, insertion agencies are important. On foot is no challenge for us (reference Kennedy Cup and Fittest Soldier comp), although undesirable, there are other ways we can get ourselves deep behind enemy lines. This year we have focussed on maintaining our fleet of Surveillance Reconnaissance Vehicle (SRVs), the largest we have ever had, allowing us to maintain the capability of being the most forward and manoeuvrable asset the BN has at its disposal. Further, deeper, and self-sustained for longer. Also, as a larger footprint on the ground, with all five patrols being able to step off with SRVs.

A benefit of supporting multiple SASR and 2CDO Training Support Request (TSR) exercises is now majority of the platoon is qualified in Airborne Roping and Rappelling, increasing our capabilities on different insertion agencies.

In the Sniper world, new capabilities were also explored; with a new suite of weapons tested by our very own at the L300 weapons trials, adding more lethality to our Long Range Pest Control teams.

Capability building also needs to start from the bottom; much of what we learned on our new capabilities was integrated into our Basic Reconnaissance Course (BRC). With an emphasis on teaching of the individual pieces of equipment, we employ as a platoon. This means those who pass will have a good understanding of all of our equipment and capabilities and hit the ground running when they join the platoon. A different sort of field phase of the course saw the trainees conducting FMPs all across Darwin at military and non-military training areas. This expands the trainee's exposure to different mission parameters and styles that differ from the classic Mt Bundy exercises, and continues to build the capability in a modern battlespace.

While still maintaining all of the necessary skill progression that is required of us, we also supported over 50 different exercises and deployments this year.

Shortly following the conclusion of Predators Run the platoon rapidly conducted refit and prepared to deploy to Bradshaw training area to set the conditions for Battle Group Tiger's arrival. Mounted patrols inserted and identified enemy positions within mere hours of arrival to the AO. Patrols observed enemy positions for several days before the order to collapse and move to the BG staging area and deploy to

QLD. This saw 3 BG Tiger recon patrols and 1 Brigade information targeting (BIT) teams load up into C130's and fly to a staging area within Rockhampton shortly before entering the main AO of EX TALISMAN SABRE 2025. The exercise enabled a wide range of recon functions from mounted ISR patrols to dismounted route reconnaissance to enable passage of seventh Brigade LAV-25's deep into enemy sectors. Recon reserve was utilised and able to fulfil any job needed acting as Counter ISR and security to the battle groups role one facility.

The August Training Support Request (TSR) saw a patrol plus group flown to Perth to be role-players for the SASR's reinforcement cycle. Platoon members were dressed in civilian clothes, given rental vehicles and Air BnB's to stay and had a rotation of venues and locations to frequent to build a pattern of life. Members were constantly observed and reported on throughout the duration of the exercise. Culminating in a rural raid on the role player's crime syndicate camp to conclude the training. RS PL members in the following days got the opportunity to take place on the SASR



run Helicopter Insertion and Extraction Techniques (HIET) Course involving rappelling, fast roping and suspended extraction methods. Additionally the patrol was given a full day of blue bolt M4/Glock urban training within the indoor facilities on Campbell barracks.

Throughout the year, the PL has achieved an incredible level of qualification throughout all members. The most drivers in recent years, most UAS pilots in recent years and continuation of junior NCO's completing and excelling on promotion courses both internally within 5/7 and outside of unit at OFF/NCO.

Some notable standouts aside from the usual exercises were Student Of Merit (SOM) on the USMC Scout Sniper Screener (an incredibly difficult course), SOM in the second iteration of Advance Reconnaissance Course (ARC) for the year, SOM Snipers Supervisors course, and SOM for Section Commander Battle Course (SCBC). We also fielded members for the teams competing in the Veterans games, winning the Darwin heat, and going on to place 4th at the national competition.

At the time of writing this article, 90% of the Platoon is still away, maintaining the rage all the way up until the Christmas break. Currently we have members in the Philippines, Malaysia, Costal Watch, Mobile Fire Control Courses, preparing for OP KUDU VII and yet another SASR TSR.

2025 has been an exceptional year for Recon platoon, having achieved every goal set and more. Our efforts on every action the battalion has undertaken has enabled the rifle companies to achieved their primary function and destroy the enemy.

This will continue as we look into next year, and maintain our status as the best, most versatile, and most capable platoon that 5/7 has to offer.

By the Soldiers of Recon Sniper Platoon

MORTAR PLATOON



A live Fire at dusk

This year the 5/7 RAR Mortar Platoon delivered an exceptionally busy and rewarding program of activities, reinforcing our lethality, interoperability and readiness within the Battle Group.

A major milestone for the platoon was the successful incorporation of the HMT Supacat into our mortar platoon ORBAT. Integrating the Supacat has improved our mobility, survivability and sustainment. The work done this year to validate vehicle integration, stowage and in-route drills sets the platoon up well for continued employment of the platform.

We executed a number of exercises that tested our ability to plan, coordinate and deliver timely indirect fires under pressure:

- EX GOATS BLAST saw the platoon conduct complex live-fire serials that combined precision technical drills with battle drills. The exercise validated our fire control procedures and ammunition

handling under realistic conditions.

- EX PREDATOR'S RUN & EX TALISMAN SABRE — we deployed elements to both exercises, operating in joint and combined environments that enhanced our command-and-control, logistical planning and interoperability as a part of BG Tiger. A highlight was deploying Mortar Teams across a variety of insertion agencies from small boats to contested TALO profiles.



Delivering Mortar Lessons to the Filipinos on JATT-P.

As part of JATT-P Roto 2, a large element of the platoon deployed to the Philippines to work alongside the Armed Forces of the Philippines mortar teams. The exchange strengthened partner relationships increased mutual understanding of mortar TTPs and culminated in a combined live-fire. This engagement is a clear example of the platoon contributing to regional security through international engagement. Furthermore, a mortar section deployed on RCT 149 and executed a live-fire in Malaysia's School of Infantry.

A standout achievement was running the battalion's first Basic Mortars Course (BMC) since 2022. The course qualified 30 new soldiers, significantly increasing our depth of trained mortar men in the unit.

Work has progressed on the introduction of a 60mm mortar system into the battalion from 2026. This exciting development involves testing, procurement coordination and drafting new employment procedures in the littoral and light infantry space. The introduction of the 60mm will enable the

CT commanders more flexibility in employing organic indirect fire.

Collectively, the platoon's activities this year have been demanding but highly productive. Through rigorous live-fire training, international engagement, capability integration and successful force generation of 30 qualified mortar men, 5/7 RAR Mortar Platoon has demonstrably increased its readiness and relevance across the full spectrum of tasking. Thanks to all ranks for their professionalism and to the families and support elements whose contribution underpinned a successful year.

LT Ahan Patnayak

SIGNAL PLATOON



A Sig in the field

2025 has been a year defined by operational reach, technical excellence, and steady professionalism for Signals Platoon, 5/7 RAR. In support of 1 Brigades ongoing littoral transformation, the Platoon has remained the connective tissue of the Battalion—delivering communications capability across a range of exercises, deployments, and operations both in Australia and abroad.

The year began with 10 Detachment deploying to Tully in support of Alpha Company, ensuring robust communications throughout the challenging tropical environment. Shortly after, 10 Detachment again deployed alongside Alpha Company on Ready Combat Team (RCT) 149 to Malaysia, providing seamless command and control links as the company trained alongside regional partners.

20 Detachment maintained a busy tempo throughout the year, deploying with Bravo Company on Exercise Talisman Sabre, where they focused on interoperability with the United States Marine Corps. Their efforts ensured the seamless integration of communications architecture across Australian and US systems. Later in the year, 20 Detachment deployed again with Bravo Company on Operation Resolute, maintaining persistent network connectivity and supporting the company's contribution to national border protection tasks.

At the start of the year, 30 Detachment deployed to the Philippines with Charlie Company, who trained alongside the Philippine Army and US Army. Operating in complex and dynamic conditions, 30 Detachment delivered reliable communications across multinational lines, strengthening regional cooperation and tactical proficiency. They have since redeployed to continue supporting Charlie Company on JATT-P, enabling C COY's ongoing mission to train and mentor the Philippine Army.

40 Detachment, supporting Delta Company, was heavily engaged during Exercise Talisman Sabre, where Delta was designated the Battalion main effort. Operating in the demanding environment of Shoalwater Bay, 40 Detachment proved crucial in maintaining communications during the company's littoral insertion, establishing vital links immediately upon landing and ensuring command continuity during the assault phase.

During Exercise Predators Run, 0A and 0B Detachments developed and implemented the Battalion's first retransmission Standard Operating Procedures, ensuring continuous communications across dispersed terrain. Their initiative enabled seamless command and control between forward combat teams and headquarters, directly supporting the Commanders intent and mission success. The framework they established has since become the benchmark for retrans operations within 5/7 RAR, strengthening the Battalion's readiness for future littoral deployments.

As the Army continues its shift toward littoral operations, Signals Platoon has demonstrated that reliable communications are the foundation of combat effectiveness. From Tully to Shoalwater Bay, Malaysia to the Philippines, and everywhere in between, the dedication of the Platoon's signallers has ensured that wherever 5/7 RAR operates, the network follows.



Sigs operate on Ex Predators Run.