

LETHAL, AGILE, AND HARD TO KILL: THE TIGER BATTALION IN 2026



5TH/7TH BATTALION, THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT



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It is a privilege to contribute to this edition of *Tiger Tales* and to provide our community with an update on where the Battalion stands today and where it is headed in 2026.



Lt Harrison Blain of 5/7 RAR ready to board an Osprey on EX BALIKATAN.

As we step into the year ahead, we do so with a deep sense of pride in what the Tiger Battalion achieved in 2025. For one of us, it has been a period of reflection on a Battalion already well known; for the other, a privilege to join a unit whose reputation and performance speak for themselves. Both perspectives lead to the same conclusion: 2025 was a year of hard soldiering and genuine transformation. The Battalion completed its evolution into a light infantry battalion optimised for littoral manoeuvre and air mobility—a shift that demanded adaptability, humility, and disciplined effort.

Stepping into command, it is striking to see the scale, pace, and quality of what the Tigers achieved so soon after the Battalion's re-establishment on the Army's order of battle in late 2024.

Throughout 2025, the Tigers worked hard, travelled widely, and consistently demonstrated the toughness and professionalism expected of Australian infantry. The Battalion finished the year sharper, leaner, and more certain of its purpose as a light infantry battalion. That confidence is well earned.

Eyes Forward to 2026: Warfighting First

The focus in 2026 is clear: warfighting first. The Battalion will prioritise collective force generation and the development of highly lethal combined-arms teams. Through the TIGER and PREDATOR training series, and as part of 1st Brigade's contribution to the 1st (Australian) Division Warfighter Exercise, we will sharpen our ability to fight as we intend to operate—with expert lethality, operational agility, and the mental and physical resilience that makes us hard to kill.

Adapting to the Character of War

Warfighting in 2026 also demands that we adapt to the accelerating pace of technological change. The Battalion will accelerate the integration of robotics and autonomous systems. These systems enhance tempo, survivability, and decision-making. Embracing them is not about replacing soldiers, but about increasing agility—keeping pace with the changing character of war and giving our people better options at the point of contact.

Committed at Home and Abroad

Our companies will remain fully engaged across a demanding operational and training program. D Company formed the core of Operation KUDU – Training (UK) Rotation XII, deploying over the Christmas period and representing the Battalion abroad in cold and austere



Soldiers from 5/7 RAR prepare to board a Hercules at the Nackaroo Airfield in the Bradshaw Field Training Area (BFTA).

conditions training the Armed Forces of Ukraine. B Company will shortly return to the jungles of Tully for the Jungle Warfighter Exercise, testing themselves in one of the Army's most unforgiving training environments—where heat, terrain, and fatigue reduce soldiering to fundamentals.

A Company will lead Army's contribution to maritime border protection activities, maintaining the Battalion's role on the front line of national defence. B, C, and D Companies will once again deploy throughout Southeast Asia, strengthening relationships with close regional partners through demanding and high-value training. Logistics Company will support all activities while generating an agile A2 echelon, fully integrated with the Battalion's warfighting effort.



Members of B Coy 5/7 RAR on a zodiac patrolling mangroves on OP RESOLUTE.

“Reinforcement”: Preparing Soldiers for War

The Battalion will again conduct its own reinforcement cycle of individual training courses—a challenging task as the Brigade's sole infantry battalion. Support Company will deliver the Section Commanders Battle Course, preparing our most promising soldiers and junior non-commissioned officers to lead infantry sections on combat operations. Alongside this, the Battalion will continue to deliver watercraft, communications, driving, and combat casualty care training. Above all, our primary effort remains on dismounted lethality: battlefield shooting, combatives, and infantry specialist courses.

Our Regimental Legacy

In June, the Battalion will host Binh Ba Week in Darwin. This year, Binh Ba Week will occur over 15-19 June due to ongoing activities. The week's activities will offer a valuable opportunity to reflect on the history of 5 RAR and to commemorate not only the Battle of Binh Ba (6–9 June 1969), but all combat actions and operations undertaken by the Tiger Battalion from Vietnam to the present day. Events will include a Soldier and Veterans Dining-In Night, the Binh Ba Parade, and the Jason Challis Memorial Australian Rules Football Match. We hope to welcome as many past Tigers as possible.

Later in the year, we will honour our 7 RAR veteran community with Corporal James Francis “Gabby” Hayes Night, preceded by a full day of activities in late August. This will be an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the



Members from 5 RAR with members of the USMC, Philippine Coast Guard and Philippine Marines.

Pig Battalion, whose Vietnam service includes actions such as the Battles of Suoi Chua Pha and Operation Coburg on their first tour, and Operations Concrete and Cung Chung on the second. Like the 5th Battalion, 7 RAR also built upon its enviable legacy following its re-raising between 2006 and 2024. For the equally storied 5/7 RAR community, further detail on Battalion Birthday (3 December) events will be provided in due course.

Who we are.

As light infantry, we know who we are. We do not rely on weight or complexity—we rely on soldiers. A Tiger carries what he needs, moves when called, and adapts faster than the problem in front of him. That mindset—quiet readiness, disciplined preparation, and the ability to reset quickly—gives us options that heavier forces do not always possess. It allows us to arrive early, endure longer, and fight effectively wherever we are sent.

Based in the Northern Territory, the Tiger Battalion considers itself part of the nation's "stand-in forces". Living and working in Darwin places us at the ADF's forward line of own troops. Training and operating daily in the heat, humidity, and terrain of our likely operating environment forges both resilience and readiness.

The Tigers enter 2026 with momentum, clarity, and a reputation earned through action. We are proud to lead this Battalion and confident in what it will achieve next.

Duty First.



B Coy 5 RAR members on a pair of zodiacs on OP RESOLUTE.