



ROOSTER NEWS



4th Aug 00

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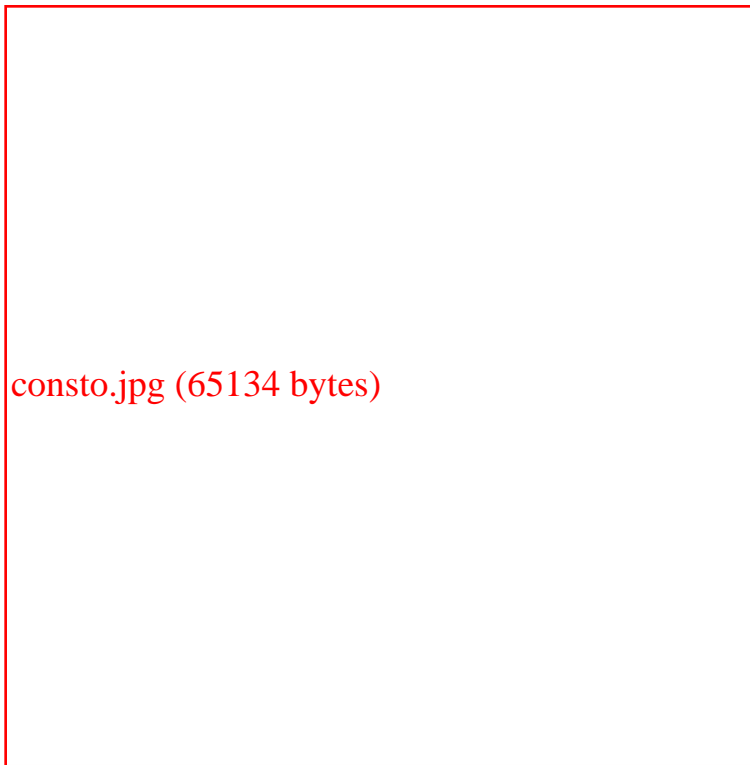
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THE DETACHMENT COMMANDER –



CAPT Jason DENNIS

Hello again from the Tiwi Islands. I hope this newsletter finds you safe and well. We have just passed the project mid point and are into the home stretch I hope those of you who saw your spouses on the recent mid-project break enjoyed the time as much as Nicole and I did, and that those of you who are looking forward to the next mid-project break have a great time. The end dates for the project have not been altered since the last newsletter, which is a good sign, because the closer we get to the end the less chance there is of a significant change.

Plant Troop have made a significant impression since the last newsletter. I think that a lot of us here in the detachment (including myself) are quick to take the mickey out of the planties, especially when things get broken, but the fact is that they have been up against it since the start, with limited planning time and less than adequate designs. The fact that they are looking at finishing on time, despite all the extra jobs given to the troop, is a testament to how hard they have worked. There is a fair way to go, but I think they are up to it.

I hope you like the new format to the newsletter – we are continuing to look for ways to improve it. I've given an interview later, so I might sign off now and hand over to the DSM.

Take care and we'll see you as soon as we can.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DETACHMENT SERGEANT MAJOR AND WORKS MANAGER.

WO1 Trevor DUNCAN

Work continues on well but we are at that grinding stage of the project, half way there but still a way to go. Some have had their mid project break while others close in on that day rapidly. Having had my break I can understand those who are looking forward to it keenly. I urge all to enjoy it, as like all good things it will pass quickly.

The renovations continue at a good speed. Some of the lads think that they can see the end but there is still some work to do yet so don't get too excited and drop the standard which to date has been exceptional. Work is flying along nicely on the new houses as well. Blocks are being laid at a good rate and to a good standard. Diesel keeps an eye on that as well as the ring-in block layers who by all reports are fitting in well and doing a good job as well as teaching our boys some good tricks of the trade (make sure they don't learn too many tricks Diesel). I do have some concerns with the Electricians though. It would seem that a late arrival has forced himself into the electrical connection and five is one to many at the dinner table and one of the original connections is being forced to eat on his own.

Training team continues on slowly. Attendance is a problem with such things as the Bush Holiday, Darwin Show public holiday, Darwin Cup public holiday and weekends the main concern. It was always going to happen. To fill the spare time the team continues with Saturday duties.

The planties are hooking in. Roads are coming along nicely and the drainage rolls on. They have had a few minor difficulties but always recover quickly to keep the momentum. The contractors have arrived and are fitting in well. The concrete/grouting starts in earnest soon, look forward with interest to see that.

The caterers continue with the good work. It should be added however that it would appear that their ability to catch fish is not as good as their ability to cook them. Who was the young man who was bitten by a fish? It has also come to my attention that there are plenty of Poppers available.

Workshops battle on. The output capability is there but unfortunately the re-supply system cannot keep up. The crock park grows but through no fault of the craftsmen.

Keep up the good work,

The Sympathetic Ear.

EDITOR'S DESK.

From the Editor....

Being an avid reader, as many will attest to, I believe it is an editors' lot to probe and question topics others rather remain unasked. Without fear of retribution from the hierarchy, an editor should be able to present his views to both stimulate and provoke thought and argument, in its' true sense. Consequently, I tabled five topical and salient questions to the Detachment Commander, CAPT J.C. Dennis, and invited him to respond honestly and with brevity. Those questions, and CAPT Dennis' responses, are on page 6, and I trust will be of interest to all!

You will notice some subtle changes this issue. With the departure of the visiting Pom and with the distinct lack of officers deployed on Milikapiti, the thankless job of editor has fallen to me for this one issue. The photos are, hopefully, a little more legible and there is a change to the typeset to make reading easier, so I hope the end product is slightly better. Some interesting stories and comments in this issue. Reports from the Det Comd and DSM as well as all troops compliment each other to provide an insight into life on Milikapiti. Included are some photo pages for your enjoyment. With some special upcoming events, such as the planties mid project break, visiting QLD cricketers and another tradies weekend in Darwin, I look forward many good stories in the next edition. Hi to my family and happy 12th birthday Rachel, see you all soon. HOOT

"A Message from a Plantie"

Just a quick note to the loved ones and those fortunate enough not to be here. By the time this little tedious task gets to you more than likely most of us will have probably gone and returned from our mid deployment break. As to how many that return, well we have a book running.

The job to date has been long and tiresome with our day off lasting not nearly long enough. Quite a few discrepancies in the plans have also been detected, leading to quite disgruntled little plant operators. Since the arrival of the new batch of operators not so much our workload, but our stress limit is starting to diminish.

Since our last news letter approximately a month ago, Plant/Transport Troop have

considered renaming the troop to a more suitable Services Location Troop. This name stems from the four telephone, five water lines and the sewage manhole cover we have located without assistance from the plans. For our valuable efforts our piquet skills have increased dramatically. Anyway the job rolls on; hopefully we can have Christmas at home and prepare ourselves for next year's AACAP job.

SPR Guy O'Brien.

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

TALES FROM THE BROWN HORNET

And then there were four! The elusive and rapidly depleting training team have returned for the second half of their journey through fantasyland. Alas we are down another member; LCPL Colin Leggett has stayed behind in the real world to go on his CFC course. So it leaves myself, Horse, Ben and Briggsy to carry on, even though we lose Briggsy in a couple of weeks for his Sub 2. All is not lost as we have gained SPR Sean Mitchell (17 Const Sqn) and have thrown him straight into the deep end. Work for the team is as usual going slowly with the number of trainees we get in the morning going up and down like the actors in a German porn flick.

But with a bit more work, the end of the job should hopefully complete our one and only renovation. Even if it's not finished I don't care!! I'll take my chances with the Sharks and Crocs and swim home. Our week long break already seems a world away but we are looking forward to a weekend off in Darwin in a couple of weeks. So Shenanigans, Rorkes, The Blue Heeler bar and The Vic will no doubt profit greatly and the local female population will get to see Hornet in all his bundy soaked glory again!! Well boys and girls I will now leave you until the next insight into our wonderful world of sandflies, dust and shitcalls when I will no doubt report on our debaucherous weekend off. Hopefully this time I won't throw up on the plane

The Brown Hornet

grenade.jpg (75656 bytes)

(The things you find when you cut the grass)

CONSTRUCTION

TROOP

I write this article with fond memories of civilization etched into my mind from the mid term project break. The stories around smoko and lunch have kept everyone entertained, all of which exceeded the restrictive nature of this publication. All though SPR Schneider's quote "Just cause I want to save myself for marriage" to explain his distinct lack of form while holidaying in Darwin, a backpacker Mecca.

The half time score so far puts 1 TP down with 7 completed renovations, 2 partially complete block skeletons resembling new houses. The renovations once completed should see three quarters of 1 TP qualify as painters and decorators. Our uniforms are taking on a more lively appearance of Brunswick green, Milano and air blue, due to the colour schemes of the houses. Everyone is working well bridging the gaps between the trades. It's a common sight to see Plumbers wielding hammers and sparkies using chisels.

Some high standards were set after SPR "Puddles" Oneil devoured 17 bum holes (fruit

cake). This record couldn't be matched by any other 1 TP member. Heavy hitters in the form of local starving dogs were recruited. With the likes of such greats as "falling to bits", "nipples" and "tongue" the record was smashed. 1 TP numbers have receded slightly with farewells to SPR Spencerie, CPL Smudge Smith and CAPT Lumley, who delivered a speech to remember. The casualty lists also accounts for a couple more as the job takes its toll.

The carrot has been dangled, the 8th Sep for completion for 1 TP. Renovations and New house are on target, with 37 days to go as of the 1st Aug, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

By SPR Elks

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS

G'Day I'm Troy Dann and I welcome you to this months workshop adventure. Today we have some great stories for all those fine people at home relaxing in Brisbane. Another month gone, but workshops keeps rolling on. The mid-project break came and went, which for workshops, saw a changing of the guard. There were a number of farewells held at the team morale/bonding BBQ and awards were given out. It has been a very busy month.

Before welcoming the new crew I would like to thank on behalf of workshops, the efforts from SGT Dave "SOS" Chiverton, CPL Jono "Pa" O'Grady, CFNs Bill Bishop, Dave Bennett and Steve "are you coded for that" Franklin. They all left with no regrets and no intentions of returning to sunny Milikapiti on Melville Island.

The old crew were farewelled in the traditional RAEME fashion with a BBQ and a coke down by the waterfall. This was a huge event and the night was not without formalities. An award ceremony was held where the "Starter Motor Award" was presented for the first time to an individual who displayed outstanding skills in his chosen trade. Kirk Bradshaw won first prize of this converted and prestigious award. For his outstanding skills in starting a Unimog, whilst in gear, launching it through the workshops over the office and almost taking out the author of this article.

With the old crew gone and four members from SQLG, Graig and Bubba from 1 CER still on the island the work still has to be done. Our own sometimes fearless always-fearful SGT Layne Middis took hold of the reins and led his merry men with the threat of repatriation for any f#\$k ups. Kev, Hieny, Sledge and Tim all hit the ground running and have not stopped since arriving. Our recovery mech continues doing what he does best,

servicing 20 ton trailers, while the elec fitter "I can't do a duty, I'm needed to fix the fridge" Bubba spends a considerable amount of time chasing things then repairing them.

Our fitter gods, or that's what they will have us believe, are busy carrying out their own AACAP task by repairing the entire town of Milikapiti's inventory of lawnmowers and whipper snippers. This only leaves the motors to do the real business of keeping the Sqn moving.

Our parts storeman/telephonist/clerk/ ASM's secretary/ Sarges brew boy/delivery boy/ and all round good guy "Goody" has been kept busy running the workshop.

Now this article would not be complete without a fishing story. As part of the team, the workshop has been on two fishing/BBQ excursions in the last two weeks and since the arrival of the Ace, the fish have gone south. All we achieved on those two weekends was many hours of travelling in the back of Landrover/Cruisers to goose Creek and Garden point. Not all was wasted with a great BBQ.

By CFN Chris "SB" Dare (Alias Troy Dann)

PLANT TROOP

PLT / TPT TP COMD REPORT

Just a quick update on what is going on in plant/transport troop. The guys (and the girls also now) are in full swing. Progress has been slow to date with the tradies requiring a lot of assistance from us that has reduced our capacity to work on occasions. The barges are still coming in with stores and construction supplies. This coming week should see the last of the big deliveries, with the next barges to start taking equipment off the island! While the road construction is going slow, the storm-water pipe laying is going along at a blistering pace. Hopefully now that nearly everyone is on the ground our work rate will pick up and we will be finishing tasks shortly. I estimate that we have completed over half of our required work and will achieve a lot over the coming month.

Some members of the troop have just taken mid-project leave, with the remainder to take theirs during 11-20 Aug 00. Anyhow as the Consto said in the last issue, the troop will be the last to leave the island at the end of Sep with most of us home in the first week or two of October. That is it for now hopefully in the next issue we will be able to include more detail on how things are going and how everyone is coping.

CAPT R.J. Peace.

PS. Hi to Petie, miss you heaps.

SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS

Well, the time has finally come for the project Warrant Officer to write a short page for the Rooster news. After nearly six years with the Sqn I never thought this would ever happen and with a bit of luck it won't make it past the editors desk. (bad luck!! ED)

The finance for the project has been going well with only the odd hick-up. Having a budget in the low millions, one would think that all invoices could be paid on time. Due to the end of the financial year the usual happened, oh, oh, no money. It gets a little embarrassing phoning creditors and explaining that there is no money until the beginning of the new financial year. "*But you're the Government,*" was the reply, "**if the Governments broke, God help us**". The things we have to do!!

I'm sure everyone had a good time on the mid-project break. It was very cold disembarking from the aircraft at Brisbane Airport, so cold in fact that this little black duck took the 2nd taxi at the rank because the 1st taxi didn't have a heater, and at 0530 hours that was a bit to much to handle. Back on the island after the break took some getting use to. Bills had piled up, in-trays full, and trying to switch on again took an effort. Finally after a week I caught up.

I try to get out of the office as much as possible and accompany the DSM around the work sites. I am starting to learn bits and pieces of the building/plant trades, things like; screws that drill into wood and steel and counter-sink themselves at the same time. Screws that hold security screens in place, once you screw them in you can't get the bloody things out again. Seamless flooring, concrete pits, trusses and all these other weird things. This is the "**The Wonderful World of Engineers**".

CPL Moon is still hanging in there and is extremely busy looking after the project construction stores. He will be returning to Brisbane sometime in August to prepare for his move up north and also to ensure his Fiancée has completed preparations for their wedding which is to be held on Remembrance Day 11/11/00.

Lisa arrived on the C-130 on the 14th of July to take over from Hoffy in the Orderly Room. Hoffy left for Brisbane after being on this Island paradise from the 22nd May. Poor Hoffy, he had tears in his eyes and had to be physically pushed onto the plane and Joel wasn't much better, we had great difficulty getting him to let go of Lisa's apron strings.

Lisa has fitted in well and is enjoying the challenge. She thinks the best part of this trip is the Sunday's off, swimming at either the water hole or the waterfall.

We are expecting visitors on the 9th Aug namely the SSM, WO1 Fox, SQMS, SGT Vine, SGT Ironmonger, SGT Stanley, CPL Lind (21 Regt), CPL Ninnes and SPR Slape. I'm sure we will find plenty of work for them. The project is going well and everyone is working hard to complete the project up to standard and on time.

Finally I'm posted to Melbourne in the new year. I have enjoyed my 6 years with the Sqn, the highlights being away from Enoggera most years starting with K95, and then all major deployments since. 21st Construction Squadron is probably the best unit I have been in.

By WO2 Brian Ashton.



snowman.jpg (73491 bytes)

CONSTO QUESTIONS

Q1. THERE HAS BEEN MUCH TALK OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS OR SO OF AN AACAP ALLOWANCE TO FINANCIALLY COMPENSATE MILITARY PERSONNEL

FOR THE EXTENDED PERIODS OF ABSENCE IN REMOTE AREAS. WHAT IS THE LATEST?

A1. There has been no definite outcome at this stage. As a Sqn we have put forward our case to our direct higher HQ – Land Command Engineers, who are currently addressing this with the personnel branch of the Army. We also have ensured that this is mentioned to all high profile visitors (eg: Chief of Staff Land Headquarters) that come here to try to make people aware of our specific circumstances.

Q2. HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU OF THE RETURN HOME DATES FOR SOLDIERS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY PROMULGATED?

A2. I am confident that the only thing that might delay the return home dates is bad weather. We know what we have to do, and we will work as hard as required (including extended work hours if necessary) to ensure these dates are met.

Q3. WHAT ARE THE TASKS AND LIKELY DEPLOYMENT PERIOD FOR THE SQUADRON'S SOLDIERS NEXT YEAR?

A3. We have not been given that information yet. A decision is likely to be made in the next two weeks – until then I don't want to speculate.

Q4. YOU HAVE NOW BEEN IN THE JOB OF CONSTRUCTION OFFICER FOR ABOUT EIGHT MONTHS AND IN THAT TIME HAVE HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS THE WORKINGS OF THE SQUADRON. HAVE YOU ANY SPECIFIC AIMS OR OBJECTIVES FOR THE SQN AS A WHOLE?

A4. This is probably better answered by the OC. For the detachment my aims are, in priority order, to:

a. Create a professional work environment that is as safe, comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

b. Complete the work on the project to the best possible standard we can achieve.

c. Complete the work in time to meet our return home dates.

d. Provide the aboriginal community with something they will appreciate in the future – not only the physical infrastructure but the experience of having us in their community.

Q5. WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES EFFECTING YOUR SOLDIERS THAT ARE OF A CONCERN TO YOU?

A5. *The main issues that concern me are:*

- a. *Living conditions – I want them to be as comfortable, flexible and ‘normal’ as possible.*
- b. *Leave – I want to ensure leave dates home to spouses in particular are not altered, and that the soldiers have opportunities to get off the island, whenever practical, or at least to get out of the camp..*
- c. *Contact with home – I want phones to be accessible, mail not to be delayed and the internet to be available. I am also keen for the internet conferencing to be used.*

COMMENTS FROM THE MASKED MEDIC AKA DOCTOR CHEESEMAN AKA SGT Wayne Jellatt

Well, as my time grows short at 21 Const Sqn I would like to reflect on some of my experiences since joining this Unit in 1998. At first coming from the cheese factory, I was a bit soft. 21 certainly has hardened me up somewhat.

Initially I'd thought that after 4 years in the ville at 2 RAR that I would have an easy time at 21, but alas it was not to be. My first trip was on AACAP at Bickerton Island and I was to find out how hard you blokes worked, I couldn't believe how much you could do with so little. Anyway it was there that I was introduced into the dark world of the plantie by some of the more colourful members of plant troop. Our time on leave at the ARC in Groote was an experience that I wish I could remember, but I think someone might have been feeding me too many beers.

So with that trip under my belt I then prepared to try and see how many injections I could give you guys before you started to glow in the dark, and for the record it is 11 in one hit. And still I could not quell the tide of people coming to the RAP at sick parade.

After awhile I thought that I'd better try the other side of the fence with 1 Troop so it was then off to Tonga for a short stint. On arrival I was introduced to the delights of Tonga by non other than Diesel. My time in Tonga was mostly spent trying to put Matty (Mathiske) back together and fending off Briggsy and Spence from the food, other than that I learned that there was a right way and a wrong way to carry bricks and that no amount of practice can prepare you for the horrible taste that carva leaves you with.

And finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people in the Unit that have made my time here more enjoyable. And remember if it can't be fixed by the Cheeseman it's not worth getting.

All the best in the future and stay safe, the Army is changing.

By SGT Wayne (Cheeseman) Jellatt



buildingopen.jpg (63092 bytes)


Milikapiti Supermarket – this is an example of outstanding Tiwi architecture that has been due to open "next week" since we arrived.



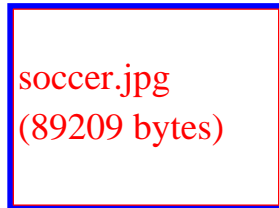
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