



# ROOSTER NEWS



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## THE DETACHMENT COMMANDER –



consto.jpg (65134 bytes)

### CAPT Jason DENNIS

Hi again, and welcome to Rooster News Issue 2, by far one of the best two issues this year. Again I have read the rest of the newsletter before writing this and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. I can honestly say that the project so far is going better than planned. I can also re-emphasize the great work our guys are doing up here, but I think that what most of you really want to hear from me is when your husband / boyfriend / dad / son / best mate will be coming home. I appreciate that this is very important to you, as it is to Nicole and I, so I am not going to be vague. The following are the current planned leave and return dates for the project:

#### LEAVE

**15-23 Jul 00** – Mid project leave for personnel who arrived in Milikapiti before 27 Jun 00. This is mainly for 1 Troop members and some members in Plant/ Transport Troop, Training Team and Squadron Headquarters. Married members taking leave at this time are able to return to Brisbane. Single members have the option of taking leave in Darwin or Brisbane. Some members of workshops will be returning home for good.

**12-20 Aug 00** – Mid project leave for personnel who arrived in Milikapiti on or after 27 Jun 00. This is mainly for Plant/ Transport Troop members and some members in and Squadron Headquarters. Married members taking leave at this time are able to return to Brisbane. We have planned for single members to be able to take leave in Brisbane or Darwin, however if RAAF aircraft are unavailable at that time, transport to Brisbane will be at the soldiers' expense.

## RETURN HOME

**8 Sep 00** – Vertical construction tradesmen return home. This will mainly be 1 Troop members (apart from the training team and those members preferring to remain until the end of the deployment) and some members of Plant Troop who arrived on 1 Jun 00 or earlier. We have planned for this to be on RAAF transport, therefore the exact date may change slightly to tie in with aircraft availability.

**19 Sep 00** – All work on Milikapiti completed.

**2 Oct 00** – Camp pack up complete. No personnel remaining on Melville Island. Road move to Brisbane commences, involving mainly drivers from Plant Transport Troop. We have planned for personnel not required on the road move to return to Brisbane on RAAF transport. Again the exact date may change slightly to tie in with aircraft availability.

**9 Oct 00** – Road party arrives in Brisbane. All detachment personnel have returned home by this time.

It is important to point out that the above dates apply to almost all of the members of the detachment. In certain situations, members' individual circumstances have been, or will be, taken into account, and their leave and/ or return home dates may be adjusted accordingly. The individual soldier concerned can inform you directly if this is the case. The leave dates above **will** occur. Unfortunately I am unable to guarantee the return dates. I **can** guarantee that I will advise you of any changes promptly through this newsletter and CAPT Todd Saunders in Brisbane. I can also guarantee that if these dates are extended, it will be due to circumstances beyond our control (excessive rain, heaps of unearthed rock etc).

I hope this information is able to answer questions you may have had. Todd is able to contact me directly at any time, so if you have any other questions please call him. Until the next newsletter, please stay safe.

PS Nic - I can't wait to see you!

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE DETACHMENT SERGEANT MAJOR AND WORKS MANAGER.**

**WO1 Trevor DUNCAN**

Well since the last issue things have certainly warmed up around here. The average temperatures

last issue were 17 - 29 they are now 22 - 37. Sleeping bags are not required as often.

The planties are now on the ground in numbers and as we all know that means more dust every where, cries of don't use the road unless you have to, don't drive over my windrow, stay off my site, we are bigger than you get out of our road, workshops can't fix things as fast as we can break them, the tradies can't fix services as fast as we can find and break them, and it just goes on and on. Having said all that the road and drainage work is well under way and moving along nicely. The barges however continue to arrive on Sundays.

The construction trades are moving along nicely as well. The finished product of the renovations is quite good. New houses are up and away also, however the way the renovation crews are going the new housing crews T-shirt may prove to be a bit premature. Diesel has found a new toy and producing good concrete as well as laying blocks and running the fishing competition, the multi skilling of our people continues.

The training team continue on the same house. It was expected to take as long as it is, but it is interesting to listen to the nightly report as to the number of trainees who turn up each day. I think it is time to start running a book on this.

Workshops continue the battle of the broken machinery. It would be fair to say that by the time this project is over they will have worked on every piece of kit here. Washing machines are now their specialty not to mention refrigeration, generators, ice machines and other essential project equipment.

The cooks continue with their good work also. The author's waistline is testament to that. Consto continues his battle in this area. I must say however that the officers' idea of a rest day leaves me a little confused.

Keep up the good work.

The Sympathetic Ear.

## **EDITOR'S DESK.**

### **From the Editor....**

Quite some time has passed since the last edition of the Rooster News. This can be taken as a measure of the amount of work that has been done and the busyness of all concerned up here.

This is my second and final edition as editor. I have not been sacked, honest, it is just time for me

to head back to the cold, wet and wind of Blighty. At least I will have a good suntan to make everyone jealous back home.

I have had a great time up here. It certainly has opened my eyes to issues that we, outside of Australia, are not aware of. I certainly will go home with good stories to tell about the Australian Army.

Best wishes for the future.

Capt. Steve Lumley.

## **SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE ROOSTER NEWS.**

"The face of change?"

A New Year, a new era? Has there been a change for the better at last? Is it a case of third time lucky or have they finally destroyed THAT mould at ADFA? In the nerve center of the Squadron, the Inner Sanctum, (read Works Office) you will notice changes. Not wholesale changes obvious to just anyone, but subtle little changes, changes that effect the way they do business. Is this due to the above or is it that everyone is looking to get out? It has been noted recently that most of the Works Office have been seen smiling at times, and some are even making decisions!!! Does this herald a whole new way of life for these poor unfortunates, for so long down trodden, directed and denigrated? Or are things reverting to they way they once were, the way they should be. No longer manacled by laborious idiosyncrasies and obtuse egotistical individualism, no longer caged within the narrow parameters of thoughtlessness, now set free upon the Squadron to express their own particular sentiments and conceptions. Free to guide and influence! Dare I suggest a good working relationship across the ranks is now emerging amongst these chieftains of the Squadron. If so, this could only be for the betterment of all, and could even denote an enjoyable project. Time will tell. Is this the veritable calm before the storm, or are they on a path leading not to stagnation, but forward to professional equality and recognition? As a keen observer, I will watch with relish the ongoing developments within this elitist group know as the Works Office.

**Anon.**

## **TALES FROM THE TEAM**

*Here we are once again*

*Not far from the start or far from the end*

*The mid project break has come around*

*And everyone has been getting loud*

*Planning what they'll do on this mid break*

*Pick-up, get drunk or masticate*

The ever resplendent and intoxicatingly debonair Training Team are still gracing the other troops with their skill, determination and exquisite manners. The team has decreased in size somewhat since the last edition with the loss of our plumbing guru, Bucks and our two-legged food hoover, Spence.

We have however, received some reinforcements in the shape of Pte Soraya Arrage (Medic 8 BASB) and LCpl Adrian Briggs (Plumber Extraordinaire), both of which have relieved some of the pressure from the team who were being burdened with a near troop sized amount of duties for five Sappers and a WO2. After the much-awaited break, the team will suffer the irreplaceable loss of myself for the rest of the trip and Briggsy for a period of a couple of weeks due to courses. Speaking of the mid break, the team are all looking forward to the time off, especially Ben Miller who "flies" around the site making aeroplane noises saying "seven days and awayee". (Ben is very safety conscious and from day one, has made sure everyone has at least one safety vehicle at each site).

The training is going well but slow, so slow in fact that a blind snail with a club foot and guide dog passed us the other day. The training can get very frustrating at times but it is very rewarding when you see the skills being "picked up" and used by the various trainees. The team has undertaken a few tasks up to this point including a six foot cyclone fence around the preschool which is waiting for the delivery of it's gate and have also begun the renovation of a house (Lot 245). The renovation is progressing slowly and with our help the trainees have gutted and cleaned the house and are now installing new cupboards, doors and louvers. Our house wasn't left a filthy pigsty like some of the other renno's but it still took a bit of effort to get the walls scrubbed and looking more presentable in preparation for painting. It was around this time that we "lost" our first trainee because Horse made him mop the floor which he deemed "women's work" and was beneath him, so he left.

tradetrg.jpg (96910 bytes)

While Horse, Hornet, Briggsy, Millhouse and WO2 Bohn have been "downstairs" giving lessons and supervising, I have been "upstairs" (on the roof) re-wiring the house with help from many and varied people. The re-wire has taken me two days short of an eternity to do, and any trainee that was put up on the roof with me in the morning didn't turn up after lunch! I don't know why?

A few weeks ago, the detachment, with the aid of NORCOM, 173<sup>rd</sup> RECCE SQN and two of their 15 seat Twin Otters had the opportunity to go to Darwin for the weekend. Many a soldier took up this offer and the team contributed four members – Horse, Hornet, Dugong and Soraya – to sample the town's delights once again or for the first time. A very good time was had by all, especially by Hornet who left his watch somewhere in Canada. Soldiers in various states of health boarded the return flights, brought forward due to a plane being grounded. The Training Team's continued strive for excellence was oh so evident on the return flights as one of the aforementioned people with animal nicknames was the only person to spew out of all the Darwin visitors with about one minute to go before landing back at Milikapiti. The trip was a success for both the morale level and the profit margin of various pubs and clubs.

tradetrg1.jpg (88542 bytes)

After the mid project break the team has a couple of vital tasks to complete. Apart from the completion of the renno, the team will continue to go out to both the waterfall and waterhole where it is endeavoring to stop the water leaks at both these sites. This is a labor intensive task but the team in its commitment to excellence has the problem in hand.

The most vital task however is to remove a certain quadruped from the Landcruiser who will require the seat to be surgically removed from his arse; and to stop Ben talking about his girlfriend so much.

*See you when your bum cracks Dugong*

**CONSTRUCTION**

**TROOP**

**By SPR Brett McGill**

1 Troop Review Part 2

*The carrot has been dangled,*

*The date has been set*

*Seats have been booked,*

*But we aren't out of here YET!!!*

Since the last time we wrote a lot has been going on.

besserblocks.jpg (86308 bytes)

The new house constructions have started to lay blocks and the house is starting to take shape. There has been a lot of boasting on who can lay the most blocks a day without having any to be removed, as yet there are no clear winners.

kitchen.jpg (62483 bytes)

kitchenfinished.jpg (65978 bytes)

*From this-*

*To this!*

The two Reno crews are going at a steady pace with both crews on their third houses. Both crews started the houses with two weeks to go till the mid project break and Stevo's crew laid a bit of a wager that they would have their house finished, at present they are doing quite well. Rowie's crew are working just as hard, but know that the house will all but be finished and except the fact that there was no way that it was ever going to be finished in time for the mid project break.

We have just had a full weekend in Darwin. Most of the guys went over courtesy of 173 Recce Sqn who provided two 15 seater planes to get us off this island. The guys that went over were amazed by the amount of civilization that they had missed if they actually walked out of the pubs they were in.

The guys that didn't go to Darwin either relaxed or went "fishing" or as we know it "Unimog recovery" as more recovery of the trucks took place than fishing, but the boys did say they had fun.

We have a few people that aren't coming back from mid project break they are Spr Steve Allen and Spr Rob O'Brien who are going on course and don't return back to the unit until sometime in December, to them good luck on course.

With only five days to go we are all really looking forward to get back and relax not having to work the long and arduous days that we have been working.

I almost forgot to farewell out Tp Commander, Capt Lumley, who doesn't return from the mid project break so he can head back to England. To you, good luck and hope that you had fun with 1 Tp.

Till next time bye for now.

## **ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS**

**By Cfn Dave Bennet**

Well not a lot has changed since the last newsletter. Workshops are still trying to keep the squadron on the road, although at times not an easy task. With all members flat out SQLG were kind enough to send us 5 slaves OOPS! trainees to help reduce the workload, it's a shame they couldn't send some parts up with them. Unfortunately plant troop must have caught wind of the news of our extra help, as equipment now seems to brake down 5 times as fast. As you know nothing stops the RAEME craftsman from completing his job except for maybe the lack of parts which in this case (or 31 cases) has been our biggest problem. There seems to be more crocs in our carpark than on the island (but we're trying Pete Tallon). A Mack dump seems to be disappearing before our eyes after coming in for a clutch adjustment and now requires a good half a dozen or more parts after being ratted (controlled parts exchange hey Ace!). This has been totally necessary to keep the fleet up and running (there's a SP56 roller following the same path).

Our resident Metalsmith Cfn Tiho (I can do that) Vidovic and his band of merry men are producing miracles every day and to see the team repair a damaged thread with an angle grinder was a sight, but did the job (well done boys). Other than removing a few wrecks from the tip our Recovery Mech Cpl Pagey hasn't had a lot of work on but has been kept very busy keeping the beer flowing at Red Rooster Inn.

Being surrounded by water our recreation usually involves swimming at 1 of 2 watering holes or dropping a line for a good days fishing. Our own Cpl Jon (pa) O'Grady had a good day when he landed 120 kilo groper at our brew table (private joke). Well we knew the fun couldn't last forever and the time has come for us to go home and give the other guys a turn (we are saddened by this news but managed to keep a smile on our face). So to all wives, girlfriends and family thank you for the letters and parcels that kept us going we'll see you soon.

P.S. Who ever has my 12? shifter can I have it back!!

P.P.S. Congratulations to Bill Bishop and his better half Sam, soon to be parents good luck from all of us!

Workshops first rotation were: Sgt Dave (too many hats not enough heads) Chiverton, Cpl Jon (pa) O'Grady, Cpl Steve (overtime) Franklin, Cpl David (don't tell me xxxx gold is crap) Page, Cfn Tiho (I can do that) Vidovic, Cfn Bill (super bill) Bishop, Cfn Dave (I didn't eat all the lollies) Bennett, Cfn Richard (bubba) Kelly, Cfn Kirk (bum trumpet) Bradshaw, Cfn Nick (the

snore) Shaw, Cfn Chris (never stops) Dare, Cfn Ben(I could do with a bottle of rid) Johnson, Cfn Craig (new kids on the block) Kibble.

Written by Cfn Dave Bennett, love you Lisa !.....

## **PLANT TROOP**

130gonroad.jpg (75094 bytes)

*No fountains of water!*

### ***LEGS AND HIS DAMN PIPES***

Here we are on the Current AACAP task. CPL Lesgessner (Legs) job was going well until we had to run the pipes out. The story goes something like this – ‘Put pipes in, pull the pipes out’. This went on for several days, by this time Legs and his crew were starting to get ‘P@#\*+d Off’ with it. Legs is thinking ‘Are we going to get off this damn hill?’ It seemed not, until the day came on, 8<sup>th</sup> July, a Saturday it was that the damned pipes went in and approved. So now we can start back filling the damned pipes. Legs is very happy now, and so is his crew.

***SPR P.R. (HARRY) HARDMAN***

## ***STUNT MAN PLANTIE***

Never before have I seen one, that is, a stunt man plantie. These are a rare breed, who like to put their machines in death defying positions. My first encounter was with 'Harry' Hardman. To this day I can not comprehend how a man can stay so relaxed when his excavator falls sideways into one of Legs 'Grand Canyon' pipe trenches. As he was sliding in he kept his cool and lit a cigarette to calm his nerves. He showed us a grin and gave us the thumbs up. This is one man who is well on his way to becoming an exceptional stunt man plantie.

***Anon***

## ***WELCOME TO THE ROCK***

It all started on the road trip to Darwin. I ran out of fuel 10kms from Berkley Homestead. Luckily I had a jerry or two, pulled into Berkley and was told we could not get fuel there on the fuel cards. Damn it now what to do? I called the Unit to fax a 139 (request for fuel order) form up so we could be on our way, this took an hour or so. In the mean time SPR Reed and I twiddled our thumbs, kicked dirt with our toes, and had a smoke or two, before it came through and we were on our way.

Flew to the island a couple of days later. The fun really started then (welcome to the Rock). We like doing things over and over again (good on ya 19 CE Works). The planties had no trouble locating services in their area of works, with the tradies kept busy repairing them. The Mack drivers have been keeping themselves employed (broken axles, clutches, dropping gearboxes). Everyone was busy. Then the word came down that the single members were not able to go back to Brisbane for their mid-project break (singlies get shafted again). Then it was back on again (you have got to love them), the RAAF I mean, off again and then on again. Let's see how the next half of the tour fairs. Until then, up the Old Red Rooster.

## ***SPR 'POPS' COULSON***

## ***MESSAGE FROM THE ROCK***

Ten other planties and myself arrived on Melville Island by Hercules on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. After arriving I was surprised that the weather was not that bad compared to five months in Timor, which is only a stones throw away from here, I imagined that it was going to be considerably warmer. Next day! Straight into work. Chop Chop! Haul road upgrade from the Airport (Base Camp) to the start of our first job on Road A. After a couple of days on the haul road we started our first major job – Road A. With only a dozen planties and a thousand jobs to do we did the best we could. From assisting the tradies, to camp upgrade to establishing quarries, the work is

endless! A couple of weeks into it the groups have settled, the OR Road A crew has been formed (Aussies Crew – CPL Austin), Obies (CPL O'Brien) crew and Legs (CPL Lesgessner) crew. Half way through July work is steady; a lot of the plans we have just do not seem to match up with the ground. I am currently in the pipe and culvert crew, pipes in pipes out x 20? Finally a tick in the box. We have had a lot of trouble with under ground utilities unearthing them quite frequently. 100m down, 1000 or so to go. On a personal note I have decided that this will be my last trip away with 21 and also the Army, it is time to spread those wings and move on. But for the time being we, the singlies, are looking forward to the mid project break back to Bris-Vegas (if it comes off?)

***SPR 'MARTY' DAVIES***

## **SQUADRON HEADQUARTERS**

**By Pte Joel "Irish" Balam**

HQ Does Milikapiti – Part 2.

For most of the members of HQ it's been a busy couple of months. Somewhere in the middle of "paperwork central", we have SPR Matthew Hoffman a.k.a. OC registry/ movements guru/ the leave book master/ conference secretary/ fax monster/ lady of the night. If Hoffy got twenty cents for every leave related question or "has my flight off this island been confirmed and when is it?", he probably could have bought a small tropical island and spent the rest of his days in luxury. It's just as well that he'll be leaving soon as a few of us think he might be cracking under pressure. The poor man has started wearing women's deodorant, Rexona Classic Silk to be exact. A few of the desperate souls here have already started to chat him up at the boozier after work. I think he really loves the attention.

Acting troop/ drill Sargent CPL Walter Moon on the other hand has been trying to keep a low profile. An instinctive habit being part of the Q store, as he is the "Have you got it, can I have it and why not?" person. He says he works really hard but that again is an instinctive statement made by most Q personnel, we all know better.

Well what has the medic/ dispenser of chapsticks/ stout advocate of betadine (the cure all) / the shoulder to cry on type of guy been doing you might ask, not too much which is a good thing. The cooks have graciously dubbed me, "The hardest working ARA medic in the camp at the moment". I have been out on the work sites a few times and the appreciation shown by a few of the boys by pinning me to the ground and painting me brings a tear to my eye. The same feeling will be mutual when they all come in for their routine suppositories. Seriously though, I got an appreciation of how hard the boys work and some of the frustration felt at being away for so long.

As we wait for another three months to pass, HQ will keep doing their paperwork thing and we'll try to amuse ourselves before coming back home.

PTE Joel Balan

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