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File No R284-4-4

A Squadron  
8/13 Victorian Mounted Rifles  
BUNA BARRACKS  
Victoria Street  
ALBURY NSW 2640

Feb 88

A SQUADRON 8/13 VMR SUPPORT TO FESTIVAL OF CANBERRA 10 - 13 MAR 88

References:

- A. Signal S01 Ceremonial dated Dec 87
- B. A Squadron 8/13 VMR Standing Order 17

Introduction

1. A Sqn 8/13 VMR Light Horse Troop will provide support to the Festival of Canberra during the period 10 - 13 Mar 88.

Aim

2. The aim of this instruction is to detail pers to task, and to outline the admin requirements for this activity.

Form of Support

3. The Light Horse Tp will provide the following:
  - a. Mounted Guard for the re-naming of Canberra ceremony, and
  - b. Participate in the Festival of Canberra Parade.

Key Personnel

4. CPL N.K. Morris is appointed acting Tp Sgt of the Light Horse Tp. He is responsible for the transport, and care of the horses, and for the conduct of the Light Horse Tp participation.

Nominal Roll

5. A Nominal Roll is shown at Annex A to this instruction.

Training

6. Training for the Light Horse Tp support will be conducted at Canberra on Fri 11 Mar.

/7.

#### Transport

7. Transport NCO is to liaise with S01 Ceremonial concerning tpt of 4 horses and 4 pers to and from Canberra.

#### Accommodation

8. Horses will be accommodated at Canberra overnight 10 - 12 Mar 88.
9. Pers will be accommodated at Canberra overnight 10 - 12 Mar 88 in their respective lines. Own bedding is to be taken.
10. CPL Morris is to liaise with S01 Ceremonial concerning the accommodation of horses and men during this period.

#### Rations

11. Members will be rationed for, in their respective messes at Canberra during the period 10 - 12 Mar 88, and will require a packed lunch for 13 Mar 88. Chief Clerk 8/13 VMR is to forward SQ97s to S01 Ceremonial NLT 26 Feb 88 in accordance with Annex A.

#### Fodder

12. Sufficient fodder is to be provided at Canberra to feed 4 horses for 4 days.
13. CPL Morris is to liaise with S01 Ceremonial concerning the type of fodder to be provided.

#### Medical

14. A Section Medical Kit will be carried for the treatment of minor injuries.
15. Any serious injury will be evacuated through normal medevac system.

#### Veterinary

16. Veterinary services will be requested from the nearest Veterinary Clinic when required, on a member to pay basis.

#### Stores

17. SQMS 8/13 VMR is to issue stores NLT 1930 hrs 4 Mar 88.
18. Stores request is to be attached as Annex B to this introduction.

Weapons

19. CPL Morris is to ensure that the Humane Destroyer, and sufficient ammunition accompanies the horse transport. He is responsible for the security of the weapons, and ammunition on issue to the Light Horse Tp during the activity.

Dress

20. The following orders of dress will apply:

- |    |                    |   |                         |
|----|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| a. | Movement of horses | - | Work dress              |
| b. | Training           | - | Stable Dress            |
| c. | Displays           | - | Ceremonial Dress Summer |
| d. | Off Duty           | - | Smart Civilian Attire   |

Conclusion

21. The participation in the Re-naming of Canberra Ceremony, and Festival of Canberra Parade affords an opportunity to further the ceremonial role of the Light Horse Tp, and an excellent Public Relations exercise to enhance the image of the Sqn,

22. Each member is expected to conduct himself in keeping with the fine traditions of the VWR, and the highest standard of turnout is mandatory.

  
J. GAY  
Major  
Officer Commanding

Distribution:

Internal  
List C  
Plus Light Horse Tp 4

External:

S01 Ceremonial 1

Annexes:

- A. Nominal Role
- B. Stores Request (Issued separately).

NOMINAL ROLL

Member

Horse

- |    |                        |        |
|----|------------------------|--------|
| 1. | 386834 CPL W.K. Morris | Maygar |
| 2. | 3109898 CPL A. Florent | Banjo  |
| 3. | 3109908 TPR C. Ellison | Spirit |
| 4. | 3145054 TPR R.J. Walsh | Satan  |

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EXERCISE FIERY CAULDRON

A SQN 8/13 VMR

POST EXERCISE REPORT

R127-1-1

References:

- A. A Sqn 8/13 VMR R127-1-1 dated 15 Sep 87
- B. HQ 4 Bde Op Instr 01 dated 1 Feb 88
- C. HQ 4 Bde Administrative Instruction dated 5 Dec 87

GENERAL

- 1. A Sqn 8/13 VMR deployed to Puckapunyal Training Area during the period 5-20 Mar 88 to participate in 4 BDE AFE EX FIERY CAULDRON. The aim of the exercise was to meet the training objectives as outlined in Reference A.
- 2. Training was conducted with B Sqn 1 Armd Regt (-), 5/6 RVR and 8/7 RVR. Ex FIERY CAULDRON was this units introduction to armoured personnel carrier training since a change of role to that of an independent APC squadron on 1 Jan 88.
- 3. The AFE was conducted on the basis of one 5 day period with each Bn, conducting training in mounted operations at combat team level. Prior to marrying up with each Bn the unit conducted limited Tp level training and an NBC exercise. The culmination of Ex FIERY CAULDRON was this units participation in a live firing demonstration with 3 Div troops on 19 Mar 88.
- 4. Forces Involved A detailed breakdown of forces involved is at Annex A. This unit was heavily supplemented by AFV and pers from 4/19 PWLH.

Significant Activities

- 5. This unit conducted two training weekends at Puckapunyal, prior to the exercise commencing. The weekends involved APC lead-up training with 5/6 RVR and 4/19 PWLH.
- 6. The AFV of 8/13 VMR and 4/19 PWLH were deployed to Puckapunyal by 20 Feb 88. Re-deployment to home depots was complete by 24 Mar 88. All pers departed the exercise area on 20 Mar 88.

Training Objectives

- 7. The following were the exercise training objectives:
  - a. to practice and confirm hide and harbour drills. *by day*
  - b. to practice and confirm embus and *debus* drills,
  - c. to revise safety procedures for the carriage of personnel in APCs,

- d. to introduce and practice infantry/APC RV drills and procedures by day,
- e. to practice the following APC drills by day and night;
  - (1) action on contact drill,
  - (2) ambush drill,
  - (3) defile drill,
  - (4) replenishment drill.
- f. to practice key point security by day, and
- g. to practice the procedure for the coy quick attack in APC.

#### Exercise Planning and Administration

8. Exercise planning and administration was conducted well in advance of the AFE. However, difficulties were experienced by this unit during the period Dec 87 - Feb 88 when a number of reports and returns were required by formation headquarters. Due to the Christmas leave period most unit pers were absent. In addition there was a major handover/takeover of unit ARA component members during that period. The new ARA staff were required to assist in detailed planning and preparation for the AFE without the benefit of background knowledge of the unit or the AFE.

9. Had the AFE been conducted later in the year, unit reports and returns would have been more timely, and better informed.

10. As the AFE was largely conducted at sub-unit level it is considered that control measures were suitable. Problems with realism and training areas will be addressed elsewhere in this report.

#### OBSERVATIONS

11. This report will address operational and administrative observations respectively.

#### Exercise Operations

12. The level and progression of training was tailored to the capabilities of each inf coy and APC Tp. Both infantry and armour troops were generally inexperienced in the application of mounted operations, particularly with regard to the employment of tanks. As a result, commanders at all levels expressed difficulty in correctly applying the resources at their disposal.

13. Considerable restrictions on the availability of training areas due to the imposition of danger traces for artillery and AFV live firing reduced the training time available. This was particularly relevant during 5/6 RVRs period of training. As a result of these restrictions it was difficult to develop appropriate realism, particularly during the battle procedure phase of 5/6 RVR's combat team attack.

14. All commanders showed a distinct willingness to learn during the AFE. Combat team advisors and senior commanders conducted debriefs on a regular basis, this resulted in a steady improvement in the application of supporting arms throughout the AFE.

#### Participating Forces

15. The allocation of support from artillery and 1 Armd Regt provided valuable experience to commanders at all levels. Although experience showed that combat team commanders and their subordinates were not equipped to manouvre or effectively task these organisations until at least day 3 of the training period.

16. Despite the fact that participating troops were exposed to a variety of new experiences, in the form of supported and supporting arms in a short period, the lessons learned during the AFE will be consolidated in subsequent unit training.

17. Command and Control This unit was placed in support of a Bn during each combat team training period of the AFE. Experience has shown that it would be more appropriate to place the sqn Under Command less Administration of a Bn. This relieves the Bn of the responsibility of administrative support, which it is neither equipped nor experienced to provide. Problems were experienced with the provision of rations, water, POL and mail during the AFE. The two tank tps from 1 Armd Regt also experienced difficulties. Retention of the responsibility for administrative support by the sqn would have solved these problems.

18. Communications No EW was experienced during the AFE. There were problems with duplication and compatibility of VHF frequencies allocated during the AFE. Retransmission operators had difficulties in maintaining suitable retrans frequencies throughout the AFE. The passage of SDS worked well throughout.

19. Command Post Procedures CP procedures at Bn/Sqn HQ require refinement. Most APC sqn's are allocated two ACV's which allows greater flexibility in the operation and deployment of the two HQ elements. This unit only has provision for one ACV under the proposed establishment. As a means of refining CP procedures it is recommended that infantry and armoured units conduct CPX's and CP operators courses together.

Administration and Logistics

20. Supply. As an independent APC sqn, this unit possesses a limited A2 Echelon and no B Echelon. As a result the A2 Echelon must be located well forward, often separate to the BAA. It is often then not practical for the unit A2 Echelon to move back to the vicinity of the BAA to attend Distribution Points (DP). There is a requirement to establish a DP dedicated to this unit, well forward of the BAA, to permit access by unit TLC's. On the AFE the unit deployed trucks to simulate TLC's due to a shortage of tracked vehicles. This will be rectified with the issue of the new unit APC establishment. The DP timings need to be flexible to account for operational restrictions on movement, and should be conducted post midnight and pre dawn. This allows for the unit A1 and A2 Echelons to conduct replenishment of F Echelon AFV's prior to the DP, and not after, as occurred on the AFE. This unit should receive a standard load at each DP, there should be no requirement to demand each days DP requirements 24 hours in advance. A breakdown in communication and a lack of accurate forecasting by this unit contributed to confusion as to DP requirements during the AFE. An accurate forecast of DP requirements on future AFE's which should result in a standard load for dedicated DP's for the duration of the ex will rectify this problem. This unit will not request additional tankers to supplement F echelon replenishments on future exercises, as this only adds to confusion in forecasting. It is also unlikely that tankers would be allowed as far forward in operations due to their vulnerability and scarcity.

21. Repair. As an independent sqn this unit has a repair time limitation of 2 hours imposed on first line repair resources. As a result, the unit spare parts pool is limited. Problems were experienced during the AFE with the lack of spare parts deployed into the exercise area by second line repair agencies. Some vehicles were grounded for an unnecessary amount of time due to the unavailability of standard repair parts. However, as the AFE progressed, the turn around time from repair agencies increased to the extent that major unit assembly changes were being completed in very quick time.

22. Maintenance. Unit maintenance of AFV was conducted as an on-going basis. Both Bn's allocated periods of vehicle maintenance during training which contributed to the generally high rate of AFV serviceability. Experience showed that the loss of one or two AFV from an APC Tp resulted in severe restrictions on operational and training effectiveness.

23. Rations. The requirement to receive fresh rations for a large part of the AFE placed constraints on training time. Commanders were required to move back to a central meal point regularly, thus restricting deployment. On a number of occasions meals were hours late, delivered in the wrong locations or insufficient to adequately feed supporting troops. Numerous complaints were received from soldiers as to the quantity of the fresh rations, they were insufficient to adequately feed troops participating in vigorous activities. This unit would be quite happy to deploy with 10 man ration packs in future.



24. Commodity Codes. The commodity codes employed on the AFE require updating. Many items listed were not specific, such as batteries. It is suggested that the current 1 Div Commodity Codes be employed on future AFE.

#### Medical and Safety

25. The sqn has two qualified Med Asst's, however, both members were unable to attend the AFE. It is intended that further members be qualified as Med Assts in order to ensure that the unit deploys with sufficient medical support in future. Medics from 5/6 RVR and 8/7 RVR were loaned to the unit regularly during the AFE.

26. The unit experienced an EOD incident on 12 Mar 88. Medical support from HQ 4 Bde and 8/7 RVR responded to a NODUFF message despatched by the sqn, and 12 members were treated for a variety of burns and minor injuries. A total of 6 members were evacuated for treatment, with one member being evacuated to Melbourne. All injured personnel have been released from hospital and are recovering.

27. Public Relations. The unit was visited by a reporter and photographer from the Albury based Border Morning Mail during the AFE. A comprehensive article on the exercise was published in the paper on 19 Mar 88. All papers, radio stations and television stations were issued a press release on the AFE in early March.

#### CONCLUSION

28. Ex FIERY CAULDRON proved to be a valuable introduction to mounted operations at combat team level. Commanders at all levels were exposed to a variety of new experiences during the AFE. Whilst the time to train was short, the AFE did provide a sound basis for future unit training.


29. The members of this unit responded well to the change in role from reconnaissance to APC operations. The willingness to learn and accept advice contributed to a steady improvement in the tactical deployment of the sqn. This unit believes that the repair and supply agencies supporting the unit also gained valuable experience in the problems of supporting an armoured unit.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

30. The following recommendations are made:

- a. that future AFE's be conducted later in the year to avoid the requirement to staff returns over the Christmas leave period,

- b. that future AFE's be programmed for periods that do not clash with major artillery courses camps to avoid training area restrictions due to danger templates,
- c. that this unit be allocated as - Under Command Less Administration for operational deployment,
- d. that combined infantry/armoured CPX's and CP operators courses be held to refine CP procedures at Bn/Sqn HQ level,
- e. that the sqn be allocated a dedicated DP forward of the BAA,
- f. that standard loads be provided at DP's,
- g. that fresh rations be kept to a minimum during future AFE's, and
- h. that the existing commodity codes be updated in accordance with 1 Div commodity codes.

  
R.N. MORRISON  
Major  
Officer Commanding

6 April 1988

Annex A: Forces Involved