

EX NORTHERN EXPLORER

PATROL REPORT

Ptl: 9A
Unit: A Sqn 8/13 VMR
AO: GOANNA

Maps: Name: McDrill Creek N.T.
Number: 5269-11
Series: R722
Scale: 1:50000

1. Size and Composition of Patrol:

Ptl Comd	CAPT C. Carrington	MEDIC	
2IC	SGT J. Koschel	ATT	Patrol 10B
SIG	LCPL R. Van De Velde	ATT	
Scout	TPR D. Pratt	ATT	

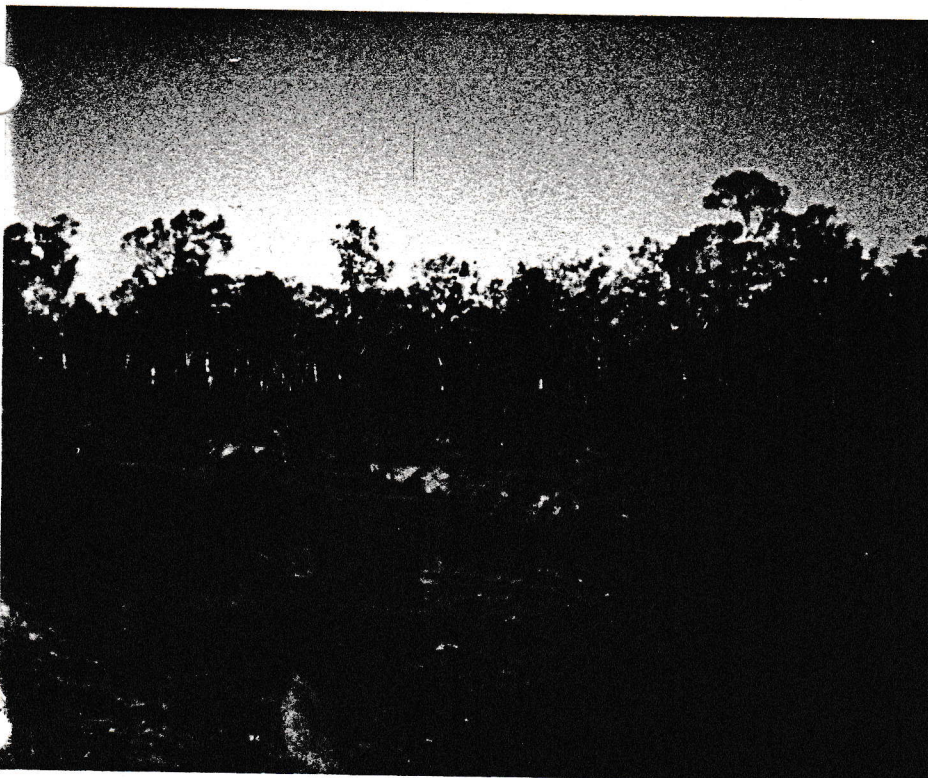
2. Mission: Patrol 9A to conduct a recon of the Fergusson River
within boundaries to identify crossing points in wet and dry
seasons for A and B vehicles.

3. Brief Summary of Operation:

The patrol consisted of 2 x APC infil from GR 119123. Due to time
restrictions the AO was divided into three areas, with portion of
2 areas only being able to be reconned.
A 4/19th PWLH Patrol, 10B, was placed under command of Patrol 9A,
with orders to work as a pair.

4. DTG of Infil: 180830I Sep 88
Insertion Route and Method: From GR 478781 N.W. via Stuart Highway
then SW along road at GR 031003 then north along track at GR 115908
to GR 119123. Movement by Unimog and M113A1 on flat bed Mack trucks.
5. DTG of Exfil: 181630I Sep 88

6. Ptl Route: See Annex A.
7. Terrain: Flat, well wooded, with numerous ant hills to 1m similar
to King River AO.



Off the scrape/ramp,
into the pit and ready to go.

8.

Conduct

On arrival at infil loc established comms with OA using F2 Radio with dipole antenna erected. Constructed LZ for rotary winged aircraft. Unloaded M113A1 off Mack trucks using a scrape at GR 118107. Orders were then issued to the Patrols. It was also noted that one of the Mack trucks with an APC on, was bogged in the sand, the second APC was off loaded and was used to tow the Mack truck out of the sand.

When OA confirmed that the "VIP" was not going to arrive at this loc, the patrol commenced at 1145hrs to GR 068154. The Fergusson River was then approached and found to have two stepped steep banks on the eastern side 30 - 40m high. The patrols dismounted and walked down to the river bed. It was noted that drift wood was caught high up in tree branches approx 15 - 25m high, indicating the height of the river in the wet season.

This is a possible crossing site for A veh with extreme difficulty re negotiating the eastern bank. This possible crossing could only be used in the dry season. There was also, numerous pools of water in the River bed. The River was flowing in the main channel and crystal clear.

When the patrol continued, the two vehicles split up with 10B sent SW along the River and 9A going NE along the River. The R.V. for the two vehicles was at GR 075155 a dried up water hole.

Patrol 9A continued NE along a track not marked on the map, beside the river to GR 100183 where a suitable A & B veh crossing was located. The APC was driven across this crossing point to confirm. It is extremely unlikely that this crossing could be used in the wet, as more indications of depths up to 20m, which would result in fast flowing currents.

The patrol then returned via same route to R.V. with 10B. Patrol 10B reported the presence of deep ravines along the rivers bank to the SW, vic GR 046150, making any crossing point their impossible in either wet or dry season.

The two vehicles then returned to Infil point to be loaded onto Mack trucks for journey back to Tindal RAAF Base.

9. Results of Encounters with Civ:

Whilst at the infil/exfil point 4 separate civilian vehs and pers
observed our presence. In accordance with orders we did not initiate
any conversations.

Just prior to exfil, a lone civilian who said his name was "Kim"
stopped his motor vehicle and engaged us in conversation. He was
keen to know if we had observed any mobs of pigs or cattle.

I queried him as to the number of vehicle crossing points on
the Fergusson River, within our boundaries. He advised that there
was definitely only the one, that being the crossing which we had
located at Gr 100183.

I queried him as to where the track running SE from the crossing
point goes to. He was extremely vague in this regard and after
attempting to relate the crossing point and track to the map, it
was obvious that he was not familiar with navigation by map and
shrugged the enquiry off by saying words to the effect; "Aw (sic)
that probably runs off to Jacky Fawcetts (sic) block, he's got a
block up there somewhere". The civilian was armed with rifle and pig do

10. Map Corrections/Variations:

Refer trace at Annex A. The track and crossing point is considered
to be accurate to plus or minus 75 metres.

11. Miscellaneous Information:

The versatility of an APC was proven when one was used to tow
one of the Mack tracks which, whilst loaded with another APC, had
became bogged in sand while attempting to turn about, off the formed
road.

L/Cpl Max Wilson OIC of the Tpt Section accompanied our Ptl to the
Fergusson River and took some film of our ops on his video camera.

This film, when it becomes available will be most useful in depicting
the terrain, vegetation encountered and the actual crossing point located

12. Condition of Patrol:

The morale of the ptl members was high throughout the entire period.
We were delighted that we had again been able to establish workable
comms with OA from our most distant AO, and maintain our impeccable
record as the only APC ptl to be able to consistently do so.
Most members were feeling rather weary when the exfil point was
reached, with the Ptl Comdr feeling very weary and suffering from
a headache. Our liaison with 15 Tpt Sqn was excellent as they had
iced water available for us upon our return.

13. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Similar to the previous days patrol I consider that far too large an
area was allocated to be adequately reconned in the time available.
The time was further reduced by waiting for the VIP to arrive and all
members were rather disappointed when this did not occur.
However, once the ptl commenced all pers responded positively and
confidently to the task of locating a crossing point.

Due to the tight timings we did not re erect the di pole to establish
further comms with OA. It is recommended that during the hrs of
0800 to 1700 only 1 sked be required to be observed by future ptls
that are required to erect dipoles to obtain comms. Although the
establishment of comms is of course important it does eat into the
time available for recon.

The ptl was delighted to achieve the aim of the mission which was
only achieved with minutes to spare before the turn about for the
exfil point.

Date:

Ptl conducted 18 Sep 88

Report completed 30 Sep 88

C. J. Carrington
.....
(C. J. CARRINGTON)

Ptl Comd

14. Additional Remarks by Debriefing Officer:

Date:

()

Debriefing Officer

Annexes: A. Ptl Trace.

Distribution:

Copy No: