

## A VEH OPS IN THE TINDAL AO

### Vehicle Movement

1. Veh movement in the north is greatly restricted due to many areas being covered with large Basalt/Volconic type rocks and tall spear grass, making visibility in some areas almost impossible. Even in flat areas, movement is again hindered by thick bush. However, benefits of this on the tactical side are that camoflauge and concealment of the vehicle would be relatively easy. Not only from enemy parties on the ground, but from aerial observation as well.
2. During the wet season, areas around, virtually all rivers and some creeks would be no-go's due to flooding and it would be imagined that A & B veh river and creek crossings would be scarce and difficult to identify.

### Navigation

3. Cross country navigation by A veh is also made difficult because of lack of land marks and visibility varies considerably, upto a maximum of around 200 - 250m. Which raises another point that many enemy contact would possibly be at close range. Many maps of the area may not be totally accurate.
4. It would be advised that on a long move, A Veh Crew Commanders make good use of the compass even if it means dismounting the veh to ensure accurate bearing is taken.

### Vehicle Spares and Equipment

5. When operating on A veh in the north of Australia, I consider it would be prudent to carry more spares and equipment than one currently carries when working in the southern areas. A suggested list is at Annex A.
6. Firstly, adequate veh preparation must be done before doing any kind of operation in the northern area. One experience we encountered was the running temperature of M113A1, 200°F. I suggest that prior to any veh going north, the cooling systems be checked and cleaned as necessary, in order to avoid time consuming break downs. Also as the ground up there is very hard on tracks and suspension, it would also be advisable that an adequate supply of shock absorbers and necessary related components be taken. Also air filters would suffer and fuel filter, due to dust and filling from jerry cans.

## Crew Dress and Preparation

7. Consideration needs to be given to the type of dress for AFV crewmen as the standard protective dress e.g. Tanksuit is considered to be totally unsuitable for these climates. Furthermore, although us tankies like to wear our black berets, these also do not give adequate protection against the fierce suns rays. Perhaps a light weight coverall, e.g. flying suit could be worn along with some form of head dress which would allow the veh head sets to be worn, e.g. kepi, which were worn by two members and proved effective. Also the crew members must be physically and mentally fit to handle the tasks that will be expected of them. Physically fit to handle heat and being constantly on the go, and mentally fit to handle the frustrations incurred due to the remoteness and desolation of the area.

## Communications

8. HF Comms proved to be reasonably reliable if utilised correctly e.g. setting the appropriate antennas to adequately cover the distance required.

9. In Veh Ops, use of the VHF Radio (RT 524) would be quite feasible for communications at a troop level. The main problems encountered with Comms was possibly due to shape of the ground with many high points being inaccessible to get to and set up antennas. Also atmospheric conditions may also effect communications over such large distances. Ideally the VHF (RT 524) Radio should be employed within the troop, and possible if necessary, retrans procedures used. All pers should be instructed in and be proficient at the employment of retrans procedures. This would basically eliminate time delays through having to set up dipole antennas and the like. However, all sub units down to APC section must have HF facility as an alternative means. Again these are merely suggestions for the improvement and retention of flow of communications in the north.

## Medical

10. Due to many things, such as heat, snakes, spiders, scorpions etc, veh med kits need to be revised to cope with these problems, including such items as sunburn cream, eye washes and eye bath, additional bandages for snake bite etc. Due to the enormous distances, in the event of a heat related illness or a snake bite, proper medical assistance may be a long way away, and take considerable time to reach the soldiers operating out in front. Due to some terrain, helicopter casevac may even be time consuming. In a case like snake bite, time is of the essence, therefore, Veh crews should carry the appropriate medical equipment, and again be instructed in and be proficient at the use and administration of the necessary treatments.

Conclusion

12. In summary, as you would realise, any major ops in the defence of our northern shores would be no small task by any means. Hopefully this report will open a few doors, shed some light, and create some new perspectives at which to look at the situation. Bearing in mind, of course, that much depends on an adequate acclimatization period from the moderate southern climates, to the heat and the harshness of the north.

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22 Sep 88.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL SPARES TO BE CARRIED

			<u>REMARKS</u>
Section of 8 Track Link	x	1	Pins and Nuts as nec.
Roadwheels	x	1	Nuts as nec.
Shock Absorbers	x	2	Nuts as nec.
OMD 115	x	20 Lt	
OX 47	x	20 Lt	
X6 279	x	1 kg	
Air Filters	x	1	
Fuel Filters	x	1	Primary & Secondary
Fan Gear Case Belts	x	2	
Water Pump Belts	x	2	
Alternator Belts	x	2	
* Water Jerries	x	5	* Allowing for extra consumption by crew, veh and inf.

\* NB. In addition to these spares, the necessary tools would have to be carried e.g. tuning fork for removing shock absorbers.