

The History of Australian Air Dispatch

The Force Structure Review of 1991/1992, was probably the most significant organisational change experienced by the RACT since the inception of the Corps. It was designed to remove over 2000 manpower positions from Land Command, including 400 belonging to the RACT. As a consequence, HQ 1ATSR and 177 AD Sqn were disbanded in December 1992, with HQ 10 Terminal Regt following in 1994. The last option appeared attractive, if suitable positions could be identified against which Air Dispatch personnel could be multi skilled, and from which they could be used to contribute to the workload of 176 AD Sqn during peak demand periods. To achieve the last criteria, the positions would either have to belong to a major 'customer unit' of 176 AD Sqn or to another nearby unit that could afford to release them when required. At that time, the obvious choice seemed to be 3RAR Transport Platoon (Tpt Pl) driver positions.

Force Structure Review - Max Grimshaw – Jan 2007



The accommodation (as can be seen at left) was less than salubrious and added to the fact that there was not enough water to shower made it an interesting time. During his detachment he was conducting a hook-up of empty water bladders underneath a CH47 Chinook, and as he was completing the hook-up, in the now very dusty conditions, the pilot got confused and struck some rubber trees and made a rather hard landing. Needless to say LCPL Heidenreich completed the correct emergency procedures and immediately informed the Ops room that the helicopter had gone down; however, as he was making the call, the Pioneer Pl from 3 RAR came running from the aircraft and he recalls: "they all looked scared and had eyes like garbage can lids".

Lou Heidenreich – FSB Beth - Vietnam Feb 1971

"The convoy set off and reached the town of Suia with relatively no incidents. I was manning the machine gun on the first Landrover standing on the rear seats, which left me very high and uncomfortably exposed. After approx 20 minutes into the journey the truck to our immediate front swerved sharply from side to side, as I was assessing what was wrong with the truck I heard the cracking of passing shots. Suddenly our vehicle stopped which put us approximately 50m away from the firers. As I shouldered the gun my face was immediately splashed with some type of liquid, and then I felt a burning pain in my right forearm. Noticing a hole in my forearm I realised the liquid on my face was my blood and that I had been shot".

Ronnie Juric – East Timor – Oct 1999



Three excerpts from the book The History of Australian Air Dispatch. This book follows the Air Dispatch history from its beginnings in WW1, through the Kokoda Track in WW2, to the current techniques used for the delivery of supplies and equipment by air.

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