

CHARLIE COMPANY – November 2022

On the 30th of July 2022, the 7th and 9th Platoons from Charlie Company embarked to Baturaja Training Area in Southern Sumatra, Indonesia on Exercise GARUDA SHIELD 22. This was a historic occasion, a privilege and enormous responsibility as the Australian Army has never committed troops to GARUDA SHIELD before. This Exercise was a multinational effort, consisting of participants from the Indonesian Defence Force, the Singaporean Army, the United States Army, and Charlie Company 5RAR.

GARUDA SHIELD is an Exercise of great strategic importance. It demonstrates the ADF's commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, and also our commitment to enhancing the level of interoperability, and multilateral cooperation in the region with our partner forces. Our focus, was to demonstrate our professionalism, and ability to operate alongside partner forces, as well as learn the way that our peer nations think, live and fight in the austere, sweltering jungles of Southeast Asia.



C Coy CSM WO2 Mick Prestedge on patrol in the jungles of Baturaja.

The Exercise consisted of a week of SOP development and integration training, as



Members of C Coy preparing for an air mobile assault.

all participants got actively involved in learning how each nation operates in the jungle environment. This was followed by a Brigade blank-fire jungle clearance, with all participant nations working together to clear a series of tactically significant objectives. The Exercise culminated with a live-fire combined arms Brigade attack, which was swiftly followed by an Indonesian style cultural day, where everyone let their (regulation) hair down.

Aside from the positive reinforcement of local relationships, the Exercise provided Charlie Company with ample training opportunities. During the blank-fire jungle clearance, the 9th Platoon conducted an Air Mobile Assault in conjunction with the Indonesian 515 Raider Battalion and Blackhawks from the United States Army in order to support the Brigade's clearance of the AO. After clearing the enemy position on the pickup-zone two days prior, air mobile elements were postured to air lift a



CPL Alex Johnson of 7 PL on patrol near Objective Peasan Ridge.

Company plus element of United States Army, Indonesian Army and the 9th Platoon into Objective Peasan Ridge. This element subsequently cleared and seized two enemy positions before returning to the Battle Group position.

After the blank-fire exercise was complete, the 7th Platoon, supported by Apache helicopters and M142 HIMARS, kicked off a live-fire Brigade clearance by conducting a bangalore obstacle breach alongside United States Army Engineers, before reorientating to clear a target rich enemy position to allow forward passage of lines by United States and Indonesian infantry elements.

The Cultural Day was an eye-opener for even the most seasoned veterans of an Indonesian shin-dig. With a live band, a mosh pit and a demonstration of Pencak Silat, a form of Indonesian martial arts that is deeply rooted in their military culture. Members of Charlie Company could hardly have imagined on their first day in country that by the end of the Exercise they would be up on a stage, in front of hundreds of people from all over the world singing “Country Roads” by John Denver!



Members of C Coy, as well as soldiers from the US Army, the TNI and Singaporean Army enjoying a day of cultural exchange.

Many of the soldiers from Charlie Company have stated that this Exercise was a highlight of their career. Corporal James Dachs from the 7th Platoon, who was promoted by the Chief of Army the week before departure stated that “GARUDA SHIELD was an incredible opportunity for us to hone our skills and SOPS whilst operating in the jungle environment” continuing to state that he “enjoyed the opportunity to learn from and work with our regional partners in my first outing as a full track”.

Exercise GARUDA SHIELD was an invaluable experience, which allowed the soldiers of Charlie Company an opportunity to show their qualities as infantrymen. We demonstrated our ability to rapidly deploy, integrate, live and fight with soldiers from all walks of life, and cultural backgrounds in unforgiving environments.

Ex ARAFURA WARRIOR 22 (Peacekeeping Operations Training) – MOBILE TRAINING TEAM CHARLIE

In September this year, 5 RAR once again demonstrated that it is the Unit of choice for SECCOPS activities in the near region.

With little time to prepare post Ex PREDATORS RUN 22, Mobile Training Team Charlie 1 was raised from members of B Coy and Mortar Platoon.

Deploying on 05 Sep 22, the MTT inserted into Timor-Leste and tied in with staff from the Defence Cooperation Program – Timor-Leste. Once RSO&I was complete, the MTT cracked straight into running peacekeeping operations training and mentoring for members of the F-FDTL at Metinaro and Baucau to the east of Dili.

Within the MTT, the two sections rotated between running the inaugural PKO package and running IMT continuation training and for the Soldiers of the MTT it proved an excellent opportunity to further the ADF's relationship with the F-FDTL and the team did exactly that through the provision of excellent training which was well received by the F-FDTL trainees.

Returning in October, the members of the MTT came home with their heads held high having achieved the mission and having helped the F-FDTL move forward in their own journey of modernisation and development.

LT McAntee

