



DELTA PATROL ON THE WEST COAST

By Charlene Williamson, Senior Communications Advisor (South),
Defence Public Affairs

Soldiers from 2nd/1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment's (2/1 RNZIR) Delta Company and various units from Burnham Military Camp have recently spent almost three weeks on exercise testing their skills in a combined arms close country exercise.

Exercise Delta Patrol was based at Lake Hochstetter on the West Coast, utilising the rugged native bush and complex terrain as a staging area to simulate a counter-insurgency based operation.

Lieutenant Harry Llewelyn, Second in Command of Delta Company said close country training was important to test and exercise soldiers in an environment similar to what they would find on operations.

"It also allows for multiple units to come together at the same time, in what is known as combined arms operations which is important to increase and practise inter-operability within the army," he said.

The New Zealand Army often trains on the West Coast and LT Llewelyn said training there provides a more realistic environment for soldiers.

"The West Coast provides us with a training domain similar to that of potential close country (jungle) operating environments overseas. While the weather and vegetation may be considerably different, it provides a medium similar enough to effectively train and test our soldiers," he said.

There were a number of units who were involved in making the exercise a success and LT Llewelyn said it couldn't have been done without their contributions.

"Unlike previous close country exercises, Delta Patrol incorporated multiple external units and assets from both within and outside 2/1 RNZIR in order to replicate a training environment more alike to current operations.

"Patrol longevity and endurance was proven by both platoons from Delta Company who conducted a five day clearing patrol with no resupply. As well as this, radio reconnaissance teams from 3 Signals Squadron remained in their hides for six days collecting valuable information on the threat group," he said.

Other units involved in the exercise included 2/1 RNZIR's Reconnaissance and Surveillance Platoon, Signal Platoon and Transport Platoon; 1 Command Support Regiment's 3 Signals Squadron, 4 Signals Squadron and Military Intelligence Company; 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion's 3 Catering and Supply Company and 3 Workshops Company; and the Military Police.

Delta Company worked with a number of people in the Greymouth area to help make the exercise a success including, Ngā Tahu Forestry, Department of Conservation and local land owners.

"The help of the locals is extremely valuable to us in conducting exercises for our soldiers and we are grateful for the help they give us, in particular the land owners who allow us to exercise on their properties.

"Overall Delta Patrol was a huge success for all units and personnel, seeing positive, collaborative cohesion amongst multiple elements to achieve a common purpose," said LT Llewelyn.

Exercise Delta Patrol is the precursor for the company's next major exercise, Exercise Taiaha Tombak which will take place in Malaysia in late July and early August.



On patrol.



Soldiers provide medical assistance to a detainee.



On patrol.



Soldiers use a remotely piloted aircraft system during the exercise.



Soldiers from D Coy secure a detainee prior to handing over to the military police.



Soldiers plan their next moves.