

How could we forget...

Afghan Signal Squadron

Tarin Kowt Troop

A few items found hiding in the back cupboard...apologies to TLD ☺Ed.

We are now approaching the sixth month of our deployment and I've just realised that this will be the last Star Newsletter for this rotation. I've been meaning to pen an article for the Newsletter for a while now, but due to the busy nature of our work I kept saying 'next time' every month. This being the last Star Newsletter, I find it only fitting to make a few comments on who we are and what we have managed to do over the past few months.

My name is Lt H and I'm the Troop Commander of Tarin Kowt Troop (TK Tp). TK Tp is made up of 23 smart and motivated personnel with up to 10 additional members attached at any particular time. TK Tp is by far the largest Tp within FCU-9 due to the diverse and complex services we provide. Our clientele is just as diverse as the systems that we employ to support them, ranging from war-fighters to sneaky peaky people, to logisticians and their support staff. Our first true test came when we were tasked with moving one of the war-fighting elements and their communications systems. This particular unit was one of the largest units on base and the planning requirements threw us into the deep end after only being in country for just over a week. The guys performed excellently and the move went to plan. This move marked the beginning of what would be a busy but rewarding deployment. Since that time, we have moved hundreds of people, managed thousands of accounts and change the network topology to improve services. Whilst doing this, the team has been part of base defensive measures and medical emergencies, both in training and real time. And I'm pleased to say that the guys have managed to perform all of this to a very high standard whilst maintaining a professional attitude.

I have tried to capture each of the guys for all those who don't know who the brave, technically savvy, somewhat geeky and always-ready-for-war guys that make up TK Tp. They are as follows:

SGT Brennan – The steady hand who has guided junior soldiers and solved many a technical issue encountered during this deployment. Also likes to catch fast moving balls with his chin in his free time. (Nick name: DK or Sarge)

CPL Biggins – Jack-of-all trades who has filled a number of roles including Safehand, Alternate Vault Custodian, ledger keeper and half a dozen other vault related jobs. (Nickname: Biggo or B3)

CPL Brady – Commander of the largest detachment, covering duties from server maintenance to the day-to-day running of our very busy helpdesk. On occasions dabbles in Age of Empires in his free time. (Nickname: Braids or Two Farms)



CPL Cooper – God of all things cryptographic, vault supervisor and one of the Alternate Vault Custodians. Loves a good game of netball in her free time. (Nickname: Coops or Polly)

CPL Kristen – Wariest SIG amongst us and an excellent all-rounder. Recently attached from Headquarters to assist with remediation. (Nickname: Kristo)

CPL McKenzie – Information Systems SGT, manager of all Information Systems and the Tp's residential B grade movie buff – just ask him about Sand Sharks. Also an SME on Pringles. (Nickname: Macca, like from McDonalds)

CPL Mills – Attached from Headquarters, but just as much one of us. Filled almost as many roles as CPL Biggins and a valued addition to the Tp. (Nickname: Millsy)

CPL Weston – Commander of the Technician Detachment and our residential fitness guru. Also inventor of the Westy Fitness Challenge. (Nickname: Westy)

LCPL Vienna – Quietly spoken but technically savvy, he is the offsider for CPL Weston as the detachment 2IC. Also loves a good WHS conversation as he expands his new found love for Work Health and Safety. (Nickname: Jock)

SIG Alcorn – Lovingly referred to as Walnut, she is a recent addition to the Tp to assist with remediation and spends most of her time working thousands of kg of Safehand each day. (Nickname: Walnut)

SIG Ashton – Has moved on to greener pastures to support another unit, however used to fill the role that SIG Alcorn is doing. (Nickname: 'El')

SIG Batman – Na, na, Batman! Our residential superhero who does some technician work when he's not out saving distressed civilians. Also, our upcoming router/switch guru. (Nickname: Batman)

SIG Denham – Our residential all-rounder for anything geek related. Reliable, gets the job done and always keen to learn. Loves a good run and usually comes first in most running events. (Nickname: Dave)

SIG Glover – From fixing them to updating them or just playing with them, Glover has probably spent half of his deployment maintaining our servers. Doesn't mind a good talk about...you guessed it...servers. (Nickname: G-love)

SIG Harrison – Our friendly helpdesk guru who is probably best known on base due to his extensive time on the helpdesk solving our customer's problems. (Nickname: Harro)

SIG Kirwood – God of messaging (DFMS) and commander of Video Teleconferencing (VTC) providing Generals with critical services to command battles from a seated position – known as teleconferencing. (Nickname: The Unit – well that's what I call him behind his back because he's always at the gym getting huge. Otherwise I'm told that Ben will do)



SIG Murphy – One of Batman's partners in crime as they uphold the values of the technician detachment. Also, our fortnightly weapon trainer and range safety supervisor. (Nickname: Sexy Lips)

SIG O'Brien – One of our super geeks who uses his geek powers to help maintain our complex network. Can also be found licking random walls in Europe when not required for work. (Nickname: OB)

SIG Raikkonen – A geek disguised as a technician, SIG Raikkonen has often expressed his fondness for the geek trade – much to the disgust of the rest of his detachment. I think his identity disorder was resolved when he found a new love of router and switch configuration. His detachment hopes this new found love of routers/switches may save him from his geekish tendencies. (Nickname: Kimmy)

SIG Robinson – A Fun-loving geek who has held one of the most reported positions in the country – the CCTV geek. Our residential sports fanatic when not maintaining the CCTV system. (Nickname: Robo).

SIG D. Smith – Our equipment guru who manages several thousand items on a daily basis. Good all-rounder for geek related tasks. Rumour has it that he is competing for the Pringles SME job from CPL McKenie. (Nickname: Smithy)

SIG P. Smith – Our classified equipment manager who manages over a thousand mission critical items. Can often be seen learning and fixing high priority systems on short notice from Shadow Group. Also has a cat who helps him determine his daily tasks and priorities. (Nickname: Smith)

SIG Treasure – Unlike his name, SIG Treasure is not precious and loves a bit of heavy metal and playing the bass whenever he can. When not touring the world with his band, SIG Treasure can be seen working with the other geeks on geek stuff – but that is only when he's not signing autographs. (Nickname: Tresz)

SIG Ward – As 2IC of the Geek Detachment, SIG Ward can often be found up late sorting out issues or compiling reports and returns for the next day. He's the calm voice of reason in the midst of geek chaos and makes sure that all visiting VIPs having accounts waiting for them on arrival. (Nickname: Wardy)

SIG West – Our residential router guru who loves a good game of basketball almost as much as a good movie. SIG West has filled pretty much all of the jobs in the Geek Detachment at some point and is one of our all-rounders. (Nickname: Westy or Westy Junior when CPL Weston is around so as to not confuse the two).

Those were a few observations and descriptions on the diverse team that make up TK Tp.

As other elements in FCU-9 prepare to handover to the next rotation, TK Tp is ramping up for its busiest time still ahead. We will be involved in moving hundreds of people to a completely new communications system that we've been working on over the past few



months. From there, we will have the task of deconstructing the current communications infrastructure whilst still maintaining ongoing support to our customers. I am confident that the team is ready and we look forward to being reunited with our family and loved ones before the year is over.



To all our family and friends, thank you for your thoughts, prayers and support. See you soon...

Proof that Officers do work sometimes –

LT H filling in on the helpdesk



TK TP



More from...

Theatre Line Detachment

THE END IS NEAR....AND I STILL CAN'T THINK OF A WITTY HEADLINE

LT R.D. PITT

01 Oct 13

It's currently 161 days since TLD left Darwin, and right now we have approximately 43 days left before returning home to our family and friends. 78% of tour complete. For some of us, this has been our first deployment, for a few it has been their second, and the rest are on their third or fourth.

Irrespective of what number trip it is for the guys, it is right about now when the 'groundhog day' syndrome starts wearing off, and the guys start seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. What I mean is that everyone has forgotten about their leave, and devising plans for what they are going to do when they are home. For the guys in TLD this has been a rather unique deployment, with our main effort focussed around removing existing installations, rather than building them. Regardless, our 'home away from home' (Tarin Kowt) has changed immensely in the last five months, and will continue to right up until the last day. Fortunately for me, I have some very skilled soldiers and airmen who have a "lets just hook in" work ethic, unique sense of humour, but most importantly, steadfast attitude to overall mission success.

My Troop Sergeant (SGT Duncan) has this uncanny ability to be impervious to the 'grumpy cat' syndrome. I could count on one hand how many times I HAVEN'T heard him say, "Aww It's a great day today boss, isn't it?" To which I reply with some mumbling and slightly aggressive remark. My team Commanders ,CPL Nagl and LAC Fraser, have been nothing but brilliant in ensuring the job gets done, on time, first time...every time. Both SGT Duncan and I are always impressed at how quickly a job gets done when these guys mention that "the footy is on this arvo". However their success could not be achieved without the support of the rest of the guys. SIG Hague - A problems solution in one hand, durry in the other; SIG King - mystery man of TLD who gets a job done before you have even asked for it to be done; LAC Kasapis - with his "no worries, can-do" attitude to absolutely EVERYTHING. Sun protection is paramount for this guy, and never goes outside without his hat flap, sunnies, gloves and long sleeves. (How you got through summer Timmy, I'll never know!); and LAC Taylor - with a work ethic second to none, this guy is like the energiser bunny. And for all the single ladies out there...he lifts.

In a little under six months, TLD have completed over 30 major relocation jobs at TK, three fly-away installation tasks to external locations (with a few more to go), set up a complex new cable network for TK, helped our American mates out numerous times, and a million "small favours" for people. We have reclaimed just over 100km of various cables (I think??), endless lengths of conduit, enough TO's to fill a small shed, a many, MANY hours behind a fusion splicer. TLD have had to work with a lot of external units and contractors, as well as fix up a few contractor 'mishaps' along the way (haha).



Of course, none of this could have been achievable without the support of my OC, MAJ Sandy Campbell and her HQ's staff. When TLD arrived, she had already raised A-Squadron (who TLD have been reporting to) and was well and truly into the job. Her tutelage, mentorship and guidance has been invaluable to me, and her friendly personality has a direct influence on her entire Squadron. Unfortunately for me, my OC has left us here for the last six weeks, to finish off the job she started. Ma'am, thank you for your watchful eye and top cover over. I will "try" not to burn anything else down, but no guarantees! However, on a different note I now have PTE 'Dougieeeee' Adams in TLD, who will continue to be the logistics guru of TLD. I think he has OC withdrawal symptoms, as he refuses to accept that A-SQN have left him behind...alone...and in the dark. That said, the remediation job here could not be achievable without the unwavering dedication of PTE Adams.

For SGT Duncan and me, it has been an extremely interesting deployment, with the team split exactly 50% Army, 50% Air Force. Everyone brought something different to the table, and have had some significant achievements over the duration of the deployment. At times, it has been challenging, but the end-state is always rewarding. We are both thankful for the support of the team's family, friends and loved ones back home. I can tell you the multitude of care packages, late night / early morning phone calls, patience and understanding means more than I can put into words. So to those who the TLD guys hold dearly – thank you. The effect that you have on the guys has made SGT Duncan and my job all the more enjoyable.

To the TLD boys: Thank you for your service, your achievements and your ongoing humour throughout this deployment.

Now for a Manly Sea Eagles Grand Final win!!!!

Ryan Pitt

TLD Tp Comd



One very happy Troop Commander



SGT Duncan asking, 'Why are you taking a photo of me?'

TLD in front of an American Apache Gunship (minus Fraser who was on ROCTFA)

A popular background, I see. Can totally understand! Ed.



Some great shots...

Tarin Kowt

The boys, climbing!





Alpha Squadron



All available FCU staff in TK



**WE WISH YOU ALL A SAFE
JOURNEY HOME.**



LAC Fraser at TGI's in Kandahar

