

**No. 9 (CITY OF WANGANUI) SQUADRON ATC
REPORT ON WEEKEND EXERCISE**

Unit File Reference: 9 4955/-/2

OPERATION "Mitsubishi"

A weekend exercise for the NCO's of the squadron was held over the period of 20-21 August 2011.

LOCATION

The exercise was conducted in Tongariro National Park. Cut of map NZMS 1 series attached.

PERSONNEL

Nominal role

SQNLDR C H Quirk	Sgt	H Dixon
FGOFF B J Frericks	Sgt	P Richardson
UO B Sandlant	Cpl	E Carroll
	Cpl	S Clark
	Cpl	T Graham

TRANSPORT

A van on loan from CACFTSU was driven by myself, and was secured at the Chateau for the duration of the exercise.

EQUIPMENT

A Mountain Radio was hired from Mountain Radio with the remaining equipment including cookers, mess tins, packs, and maps supplied by the squadron.

A gear check was conducted along with the briefing on Wednesday night. Additional wet weather gear was arranged for one of the NCO's.

MESSING

All rations were supplied locally with rations supplied on an individual and group basis.

TRAINING

Two options were planned for the weekend with the decision to be made closer to the weekend. By the Wednesday night we had narrowed which track we would take, if we were to proceed. The weather forecast for the weekend was excellent and we advised the cadets that we would; be heading to Whakapapaiti valley and stay in the Whakapapaiti hut over night.

Saturday 13-0805

All at ATC just after 0830, van loaded, final check and we depart for Tongariro National Park via the Parapara's. Once we arrived at Whakapapa the traffic built up with other people also wanting to make good use of the fantastic weather. Due to the heavy traffic, mountain staff closed the Bruce road barrier at the village, however after 30 minutes they opened it and we

proceeded to Scoria Flats car park. There was another blockage in the road 500m from Scoria Flats so I made the decision that the cadets and I would walk the rest of the way while SQNLDR Quirk parked the van back at the Chateau car park, and catch a shuttle back up to Scoria Flats.

Once at the car park we put on our wind weather gear, split up the group food and equipment. We decided not to proceed to the ski-field and do some snow craft, but to walk into the hut while the weather was still good. A check of the map to show the cadets where we were going, following a briefing on how long it would take and what we would see, the party started walking.

Once SQNLDR Quirk got to the Scoria Flats and starting walking, a quick check on the radio to see how far ahead the party was. We kept in contact until he meet up with us further down the track. We had been quietly walking along stopping after 20 minutes for a clothing alteration as required and a snack stop. Another stop at the top of the ridge, for photos, snack and drink before descending into the



Cadets navigating through the snow

Whakapapaiti Valley and onto the hut. There was a lot of snow on the track which needed some careful navigation at times.

Arrived at hut, where SQNLDR Quirk and I gave the hut etiquette brief, followed by lunch. After lunch mountain radio aerial was put up and into the firewood cutting. The NCO's thoroughly enjoyed the firewood cutting, and at the end we had an ample supply not only for ourselves but others to use after us.

After that we headed off outside to explore the area and some map work and the occasional icy snowball been thrown.

Tea was prepared on returning to the hut and we made sure all had eaten, dishes done and benches cleaned before darkness set in. A brief on how to use the mountain radio and

the service they provide was carried out before the 1830 schedule. I was our radio operator, SGT Richardson the scribe of the weather forecast and any other messages while the rest of us listened in. There were around 8 other parties out with mountain radios.

Water on to boil to provide cold drinking water for Sunday and the NCO's completed route guides for Sunday's walk out. A game of cards and a few funny stories. All in bed at around 2030, followed soon after by a very quiet hut and the odd snorer.

Sunday 01-08-04

All up by 0730 and breakfast under way. Everybody had a hot breakfast, and we completed the hut clean, dropped the mountain radio aerial, and packed our gear away ready for our walk out.

Final photo call outside the hut and on the track at 0900. A quiet start to the day as we walked in clear weather towards the river crossing 30 minutes away. A few ice patches on the track made navigating the



Icicles underneath the track

track a little difficult. A cold, but not very deep river greeted us and once on the other side we adjusted clothing and continued down the valley, stopping for snacks and drinks breaks along the way. The snow along the flats was difficult at times as it was hard to work out the depth, however after some time the NCOs worked out a pattern with the snow. Once in the bush, we continued to tramp with regular, snack and drink until we reached the road. We did however stop for lunch on the track by the Silica Rapids turn off.

Out at the road at 1400, and back to the shelter where we changed into dry clothes. Uplifted and loaded van, then on the road back to Wanganui. NCO's dropped of at ATC to pick up their cars or waited for parents. Van cleaned and returned to Ohakea.



Snow in the bush line

MEDICAL

There were no medical problems.

GENERAL

An excellent exercise and we achieved several aims and objectives;

- The NCO's had the opportunity to check their clothing and equipment in a mountain environment and in all variations of weather.
- Provided an opportunity for some of the NCO's to experience a mountain environment and gain experience in snow.
- We were able to develop some more skills with the Corporals before they have a group to lead in the bush.
- Further develop teamwork within the NCO's.

Overall an enjoyable and successful weekends training in a range of weather conditions.

B J FRERICKS
Flight Lieutenant, NZCF
UNIT COMMANDER

22 August 2011



The group at the end of the track