

RAIN ON MY PARADE

March-out parades happen at Kapooka almost every week of the year, yet are not well covered. Sergeant Brian Hartigan recently paid a visit to the 1st Recruit Training Battalion to report for ARMY newspaper if anything had changed in the 22 years since he marched out.

Don't Rain on my Parade is a song that was popular not long after I was born. X-number of years later the recruits of 25 Platoon and 26 Platoon, C Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, might well have sung the same request – if they really cared about the weather, which they didn't.

Their double march-out on 22 June was wet and cold, but not nearly wet enough to dampen the enthusiasm, excitement and relief of the 98 graduating soldiers.

The Most Outstanding Recruit of 25 Platoon, 24-year-old Private Melissa Osmand said the graduating parade was a highlight of her time at Kapooka, in more ways than one.

"Getting to the end of this, really feels like an achievement at the end of what seems like a long time, with the parade as the focal point. It's a great feeling," she said.

"The parade today went a lot better than expected. We had a few issues during the week that we were a bit worried about, but obviously we were pretty happy when we got the drill award.

"It was a lot easier with the band when we could feel the rhythm, and we could relax a bit more and concentrate on what we were doing. In the end, it just sort of happened as a natural thing.

"I did sort of listen to the reviewing officer's speech, but the memory of it is very vague because I was standing

there thinking 'oh my gosh, I know there's an 'attention' coming. I can't miss it, I can't miss it'.

"And as for the rain – I could see drops of water falling off my hat, but all I was thinking was that I was going to hate cleaning my weapon after this."

Trooper Andrew Harris, now a Cavalry man, said the 12 weeks leading up to the march out was a pretty full-on, intense course from day one when the NCOs jumped on the bus and gave the new recruits a nice big spiel.

"Then they shoved us into a lecture room and we're all like 'what the hell's going on – what have I got into?' Trooper Harris said.

"The first few weeks were pretty full on. The NCOs were all over us like a rash, just making sure we could cope with a bit of pressure, I suppose.

"But the course itself was pretty well delivered throughout, from day one right up to today.

"I think most or all of us gathered up the information pretty well in the end."

His assessment overall was that he enjoyed the experience – "absolutely."

"I came from a job where I had a little bit of responsibility, and my age was probably an advantage because I think they left me alone a little bit.

"I was able to develop on the knowledge I already had of the Army from friends and family. So, in that respect

