



Christian Clare Robertson, *Balibo – Track bashing*
pastel on paper
drawn in East Timor in 2000
acquired in 2001

(Accession number 91478)
Australian War Memorial

Balibo – Track bashing

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About the artwork:

Christian Clare Robertson travelled to East Timor as an unofficial artist in February 2000. While there she visited Batugade and Balibo with the mechanised 5th/7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. The battalion's armoured personnel carriers provided mobility on roads and flexibility as bases for patrolling on foot, but maintaining them could be heavy work. Here the artist has depicted the men replacing links and pins in a carrier's track, a task made more frequent by the need to drive the carriers on bitumen roads.

The work reveals the artist's desire to record accurately the soldiers' activities while creating a strong sense of place. Her use of the delicate medium of pastel enables her to record details with precision, while subtly evoking forms of light and atmosphere.

Questions:

1. What are these soldiers doing?
2. Imagine you are the commanding officer of these soldiers. How difficult would it be to get everyone to work together as a team?
3. List the problems that you, as their commanding officer, could face. How would you deal with these problems?
4. What advice would you give them on how to lift something that is heavy in a way that wouldn't damage their backs?