

Half Circle

Number 17 - April 2008

A publication for the members
of C Coy 5 RAR (2nd tour) South Vietnam,
and especially for the families of those who are no longer with us.

Dave Wilkins said.....Christmas in Nui Dat, South Vietnam, 1969.

5RAR was resting in Nui Dat having just returned from the bush and 6 weeks of Operation "Kings Cross" except that C Company had been sent back out into the scrub for a short operation in the valley between the Warbies (Nui Dinh) and Nui Toc Tien. Then on Christmas Eve C Company also arrived back in Nui Dat to commence its celebrations. Just before midnight some of us began hearing Christmas carols eerily emanating from the ether. A few beers can do strange things to you when you have been on the dry for a while, we thought. However the heavenly chorus turned out to be an aircraft flying over Nui Dat playing carols for the Task Force through its loud speaker.

Christmas morning was something quite surprising and different for the younger diggers, particularly the Nashos who hadn't experienced the Army's Christmas tradition before. The day began with the officers and sergeants serving coffee royale to the soldiers IN BED. Many were startled awake by the CSM or a sergeant's raucous shout but then saw and smelled the steaming brew laced with rum (or was it brandy?), and heard the Christmas wishes being offered to them in their slumber. Later they again enjoyed having the tables turned on those who usually bossed them about, when the officers and sergeants continued their duties to serve the soldiers Christmas dinner.

These are old customs in the Army and ones the diggers seemed to really appreciate. During the day C Company hosted the CO and RSM for some Christmas cheer at which time the Company medic, Kevin Mulligan, produced a forbidden pet white rabbit, "Bunny San", which had been previously unknown to "the bosses". With so much cheer about, Bunny San received the sanction of approval from Genghis (the CO) and Sandshoes (the RSM) and was allowed to stay.

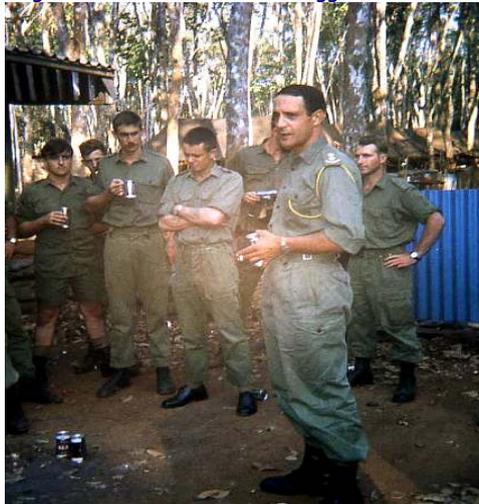
It was an enjoyable day for diggers, NCOs and officers alike. We were all relaxed, the VC were kind enough to leave us in peace, and we were all able to unwind for a day.

Ed's Note: The diggers were most appreciative of the efforts of the officers and senior NCOs in making Christmas so memorable. Having the CO and RSM as our guests was an honour. We only had limited stocks of VB, but someone was able to "negotiate" to swap some of our VB for Schlitz and Budweiser - on a two-for-one basis through someone who knew someone who knew someone at the Yank PX in Nui Dat. Our Company driver, John "Robbie" Roberts drove the courier vehicle, and I rode shotgun. We did OK, as there was enough for all, even though the Yank beer was bloody awful. Leading up to Christmas there were major union problems, preventing loading of the HMAS Jeparit, and the refusal of the posties to process and send our mail - therefore our slogans of "Wallop a Wharfie" or "Punch a Postie", as depicted on the inside cover of "The Year of the Tigers".

Some of you will remember that I was fiercely proud of my WA heritage, and that my parents were hoteliers. Mum used to send me a dozen cans of Swan Lager fairly regularly, and with no refrigeration, drinking these was a great challenge. Paddy Cahill could sometimes find some ice to assist me, but I think that Paddy might have been assisting Paddy. Hot Swan Lager was so bad that I can't ever recall suffering a theft from my tent. **Don.**



Above: Lt Ian (Hoss) Hosie serving Christmas Dinner to the diggers. To his left is Ken "Legs" Leggett.



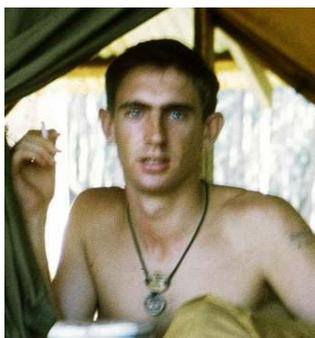
Above: A quiet one with the CO: Pte Ray Fitzpatrick, Pte Blue Newberry (obscured), Cpl Don Harrod, CSM Jack Lake, Lt Col Colin Khan (CO), and Capt David Wilkins (Company Commander)



Who is this from 7PI? From John (Buddha) Martini's and Ken (Legs) Leggett's collection. Lance Reeves? Please let us know, particularly if this is **you**.

DEEP IN THOUGHT: Have we ever thought what our Vietnam service changed: Here are some thoughts:

- Would we have been working in a bank, driving a truck, farming, in business, in jail, at university, selling shoes, practising law or medicine, landscaping, or what?



In the last issue, we asked for "before and after" shots. Only Geoff Ford and Mike Radwell came forward. OK, I'll be the mug, this is me (The Pirate), 1969 and 2007. Who else is game?



Just in..... Jack Bradd, having a bit of a sleep on returning to Nui Dat From R&C, 1969, and leading the ANZAC Day March in Hervey Bay 2006. Jack is driving his Gopher.

Bob Hooper said.....

A duck hunter stopped to relieve himself, and placed his shotgun against a tree. A gust of wind blew it over, and it discharged, hitting him "you-know-where". The doctor told him that all was OK, he had removed the pellets, but wanted him to see his brother. "Is he a specialist?" asked the hunter. The doctor replied "No, he's a flute player from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and he will teach you where to put your fingers so you don't pee in your eye".

From the SRAR Association President.....

As you know "The Year of the Tigers" (Y of T) is out of stock and we need to make arrangements for a reprint. I mentioned a while ago that I have received agreement from the Army History Unit for a revised edition to be published by Military History Publications (MHP), a Sydney based company that does a lot of work for Army. The reprint cannot occur until post 30 Jun 08, but will be at no cost to the Association.

The revised version of Y of T. MHP would prefer a "revised" edition as against a straight reprint, as this is better for marketing purposes. A revised edition will not change the current structure or format but could include the following:

- An update of honours and awards. For example, Blue Burrige was upgraded to a Medal for Gallantry in the End of War List. Also, should m.i.d's from the 2nd tour be included for completeness?

