

Half Circle



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(Please increase picture size to 150% for a better read!)

This informal publication is for the members of C Coy 5 RAR (2nd tour), South Vietnam, 1969/70, and for the families of those who are no longer with us. It is non-political, and is designed for us to have a laugh at ourselves, re-live our memories, and maintain camaraderie. Formal advice, when needed, should be sourced from Veterans' Organisations.

THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RAISING OF 5RAR:

The following is a very brief account of some of the events at the 45th birthday of our Battalion:

From Vince Feenstra: .I had a wonderful time .Also I met up with the boys from 7 Pl, who I had not seen since I was wounded, namely Dave Bowman, Ken Leggett, Alex (Hippie) Koppen, Andy MacDougal and Mick Browne.

From Phil Greenhalgh: Re engaging with Jack Lake:-- Seems funny calling him Jack, last time we had words, 40 odd years ago, I am sure I didn't have the temerity of addressing him by his first name. In fact I distinctly remember using some other sort of terminology that had little to do with rank. CSM Lake and I didn't particularly get on, but, through a quick phone call to Colin Summerfield, I learned that that was the situation with a lot of OR's, so I wasn't alone. Consequently I approached J.L. at the reunion with some trepidation. My prejudices probably showed, but by day three of the re union I had finally learned that Yap Yap's bark was seriously more dangerous than his bite.

Reunion dinner:--Three highlights. (1) The speech given by Col. (Brig) Khan was quite emotive. I did note that whilst the body had suffered the advances of age (and whose hasn't??) his voice had not changed at all. A truly inspiring leader and a truly inspiring speaker. (2) The appearance of Col Joye on stage with his baby ukulele, great reminiscence, great act, made even more memorable by the announcement by our MC that Col Joye paid for his own flight and own accommodation to once again entertain the troops. (3) During the dinner several big screens rolled photographs all night, brought back many memories and it would be my suggestion that the Reunion committee make the photo DVD available (at a cost) to anyone who wants to view it.

Finally and quite personally, this was my second reunion with guys from 9 Platoon. OK for us, but possibly could have been a bit hard on our life partners. My wife Marion had a ball re-acquainting with the wives from our first get together, as well as others she met for the first time. I believe it is so important our partners get as much enjoyment out of these functions as we do. To all those wives we say thank you.

From Claude Ducker: "I very much enjoyed seeing the C Company blokes and their wives who attended the reunion at Tweed Heads. Once again C Coy was well represented. I have always considered it a privilege to have served with you all in Vietnam. One thing that always surprises me at every reunion is how the bunch of vagabonds I commanded in Vietnam could finish up with such lovely wives and partners. We have good reason to be grateful to our wives and partners who have helped us in so many ways through the years since the Vietnam War.

It is always good to hear stories about our time in Vietnam which get further embellished at every reunion! I particularly enjoyed "Blue" Schafer's stories - you know what I mean, Blue! "

From Ian Leis: To have been a part of the 45th anniversary of the Fifth Battalion, RAR, I am proud to report that the members of this military family that exists today shows the tremendous camaraderie that we have. Also the dignified combined equal acceptance by officers, senior and junior NCOs and diggers alike. "RESPECT" The valued friendship that has grown since our time as an Australian military unit is as strong today as it ever was. "PRIDE" To see those who suffered and carry physical and mental scars, people like Peter Molloy who have gone forward in life to be what they are today. "ADMIRATION" "HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY BROTHER" The acceptance and respect given to our partners and the acknowledgement of the role they carry in assisting us in our lives. **ROLL ON THE NEXT REUNION.**

From Paul McQueen: The first 5RAR reunion for Maureen and me. I soon found faces from C Coy, BnHQ and Int Sect - all in high spirits - many I hadn't seen since Vietnam. Many tales were told. The Memorial and dedication service by Brig Smith was excellent. He lost his father in Vietnam. The dinner was great - 2 large screens with continual pictures, a meeting with Ted Harrison and Colin Khan, catching up with Evan Jones, excellent food, top venue, entertainment by Col Joye. Congratulations to the organisers for a brilliant night.

VALE - 1733840 Pte Warren Patrick NETHERCOTE. Warren was a 1RAR soldier who was posted to C Coy 5RAR at the time we relieved them for our tour of duty in Vietnam. Sadly, Warren passed away in 1998. Another digger whose duty is done. Rest in Peace.

WANTED..... Does anyone have any photos of our mate, the late Barry Thompson, 8PI? Bluey Austin wants to find some to pass on to Barry's sister, Helen Keed. Please have a look through your old photos and see if you can assist. If so, please contact Blue at austin022@bigpond.com

From the last issue of Half Circle: Max Hedley has made contact and reckons the R&C photo includes Lance Reeves (far left), and himself (Max) in the middle. Thanks Max.

STOP THE PRESS - We have just been advised that Geoff Pearson has been awarded Life Membership of the 5RAR Association. Geoff has worked behind the scenes for many years, and has held many positions of office. Those who REALLY know Geoff know that he was at times the "reluctant soldier", and often had a few words of advice for his superiors when ordered to perform a certain task. However, when we went to Vietnam, Pearson grew an extra leg and was a vital part of 8 platoon, C Coy and the 5th Battalion. Congratulations Geoff, you have earned this honour.

Just a note to the C Coy blokes - I have tried to put together a newsletter over the past few years, and have successfully (I think) compiled 40 issues. It was a bit disappointing that only a few of the blokes who were able to attend the 45th anniversary of the foundation of our Battalion could give an account of their thoughts of the reunion. Perhaps it's now time that I stepped down, and allowed some new blood to carry on what is probably the only format of this kind in the 5th, or perhaps the Regiment. If anyone would like to carry this on, please contact me for the membership list. I have had a go, had a few kicks and a lot of assistance, but perhaps I am getting a bit stale. Some of you buggers could have at least sent an email to say G'day, or if you couldn't, you could have asked a computer literate family member to acknowledge that you were receiving a copy and that you got something out of it or asked me to leave you alone.



"Half Circle" is supported by the Georges River Golf Club, Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall (Sydney). If you are in Sydney, call in for a game, a feed or a beer. All veterans are most welcome. Phone (02) 9724 1615

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - donharrod@bigpond.com, (02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with help from Vince Feenstra, Paul McQueen, Phil Greenhalgh, Claude Ducker, Ian Leis, Bluey Austin, Max Hedley, Tiger Tales (per Gary Townsend), the photo gallery and the usual crook humour.
