

# Half Circle



Number 88 - April 2014

**(If this is hard to read, try increasing the picture size to 150%!!)**

This informal publication is for the members of C Coy 5 RAR (2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**FROM GEORGE SZCZURKO:** "My comrades...Such good men."

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed together, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men.

I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades...Such good men."

By an unnamed Soldier



**AT THE RAP:**

**Phil Greenhalgh** - leg waxing? Not quite, it really was for surgery on varicose veins.  
**Wally Magalas** - oncology treatment.



**TRAVELLING ABOUT:** 9PL - a reunion at Phillip Island, Vic.  
More details to follow in the next edition.

C Coy (first tour) is also headed for Perth for an ANZAC Day reunion, with over 70 names on the attendance list.

**FROM ALAN McNULTY DCM (5RAR both tours and the 5RAR Association Rep in WA):** I went to see Kim (Hippie) Locke last weekend. Kim is in a nursing home in Mandurah, and has not been well. He always seems to brighten up when he gets a visitor, but has a bit of trouble communicating. I checked with the nursing staff who advised that he can have a glass of beer with his meals. Terry Major has been a regular visitor, and this is most appreciated. Kim gets very emotional, and it hurts to leave a fellow Tiger, but he has the best of care.

I returned to see Kim today (14<sup>th</sup> March) and passed on the best wishes of all C Coy members. Kim is speaking more clearly now. I gave the staff a carton of beer and some cigarettes and a lighter. The staff has secured these, and will issue them at their discretion. I'll make sure he gets a copy of Tiger Tales and Half Circle.

*Ed's note: Thanks Alan, we all appreciate your help.*

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**FROM DENNIS NEVINS – A RECOLLECTION FROM OUR BATTLE EFFICIENCY COURSE AT CANUNGRA:**

It was Support Company's turn to go through Canungra. My Section Commander was Garry Chad – a big bear of a bloke, and unbeknown to me, a drinking mate of the notorious Jack Bradd. In my eyes Garry was a very good leader. He was still recovering from two bullet wounds to his shoulders from his Vietnam service with 6RAR. His wounds didn't stop him from completing the Confidence Course in just over five minutes, and I think that "Pass" time was nine minutes. Lanky me fell into the water, and failed on the first attempt!

I can't recall where LT Ian Hosie was, but I seem to remember that a certain captain from BnHQ was attached to us. This particular day started with some hard PT, a clean-up, then breakfast. We assembled on parade for a weapons inspection, and the captain came down from my right and took hold of my M60 GPMG, which had the nickname "Hot Stuff". He looked along the weapon and proceeded to cock it, but he didn't set the safety catch to "Fire" first, and the handle wouldn't budge. He didn't give up easily, and gave the handle a couple more pulls. Meanwhile, I'm standing there as a complete smart-arse, because I'm not going to tell the BnHQ officer anything. The captain gave up on the cocking handle, and proceeded to look over the weapon again, but he's not beaten yet! He went back to the cocking handle and started the hand crank again until he finally gave up, having a final look at the gun, passed it back to me and complimented me on its condition. I was feeling quite a chuffed digger.

The next morning we had the same routine – PT, breakfast, and the weapons inspection parade. Again, from my right came the BnHQ captain. I thought "This is going to be a breeze". He took the gun – the bi-pods went down, the safety catch to "Fire". He cocked the weapon and opened the feed cover. Stewth – this bloke has done his homework in the past 24 hours, and I could see that he was enjoying the moment! The captain looked into the chamber, and proceeded to work the operating group back and forth, then closed the feed cover, released the working parts, applied the safety catch, handed the gun back to me and complimented me on its condition. I imagined that he must have been very pleased with himself. I later found out that the captain was in fact a bloke by the name of David Wilkins – the Battalion Adjutant! I often wonder if Dave remembers the inspections. At that time, I would never have thought that months later, he would be the OC of C Coy. Our initial meetings didn't start well, but as time went on we found out what a good man he was, and still is.

## FROM ROGER LAMBERT – I NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE

Having completed my “Magpie 31” series of articles for the battalion website, I’m now turning my attention back to the more sombre article of our C Coy recovery of the bodies of the USAF pilot and his US marine Corps observer from their crashed Cessna O-2 in the Long Hais on 19 June 1969. I already have contributions from Claude Ducker, Dave Stone, Col Summerfield, Dave Wilkins, Don Teichelman and John Yabsley but I would like to reach a wider audience within C Coy.

With that in mind, would you kindly post a request in the next issue of “Half Circle” for contributions/recollections/images, no matter how small or seemingly trivial, from the members of the company who took part in that recovery operation that fateful day.

The article has the working title “FAC Down”. It is my intention to finish writing the article not only for the Battalion website but also for the US Forward Air Controllers Association website. The article will be a tribute to the members of the Company as well as the pilot and his observer, and hopefully their NOK.

My email contact is: [rogerlambert@live.com.au](mailto:rogerlambert@live.com.au)



***In Sydney and want to hit the little white ball?*** Then head for the Georges River Golf Course, Henry Lawson Drive Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish and his team will make you most welcome. Geoff is a Vietnam vet (RAA), and is a great supporter of this newsletter. Phone (02) 9724 1615.

***Ed's note:*** What many don't know is that Geoff Grimish is more than a golf course owner. Geoff completed his Vietnam Service with 12<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RAA, in support of 1RAR at Fire Support Base Coral in 1968. He later undertook varied business and humanitarian interests throughout his working life, and these currently include the support of an orphanage in Long Hai, and the provision of doctors to Hanoi. Geoff is currently involved with a company converting and treating waste water for aquaculture, with some very promising results. In his “spare” time, Geoff has interests in racehorses. Those who enjoy a punt might like to look out for *Red Tracer (NSW)*, *Green Tracer* and *One Rar (Singapore)*, and look out in the future for *Duty First*. For his humanitarian efforts, Geoff was awarded the OAM in last year's Australia Day honours. How did we get this information? I can't tell you, but getting Geoff Grimish to talk about his achievements is like pulling teeth! Congratulations Geoff, we are proud to know you.

***Footnote:*** In 2008, Geoff sent a generous cheque to your editor to assist with Half Circle, then in its early days. When told that Half Circle costs very little to publish, and your editor is happy to cover this, Geoff insisted that the funds instead be used for the 5RAR men to have a drink on ANZAC Day in Sydney. Thanks, mate.

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***CORRECTION:*** In the last Half Circle (issue No 87), reference was made to the use of an Owens machine gun being live-fired over the heads of soldiers undergoing jungle warfare training at Canungra prior to being sent to Vietnam. We are advised that this weapon was in fact a water-cooled .303 Vickers machine gun. By 1972, this weapon was replaced by the 7.62mm GPMG M60.

**ANZAC DAY, 2014** As ANZAC Day is only just over three weeks away, I am sure that we will all pause to remember our mates - those who made the supreme sacrifice, those who were wounded, those who still carry the scars of war, those who cleaned our rifles whilst we brewed up, those who brewed up whilst we cleaned their rifles, those who carried radio sets or had the extra weight of machine guns to bear, and those who simply "watched our backs". Our bond is eternal, and cannot be broken.

If any member would like to send in a short summary of their ANZAC Day (about two paragraphs, I would be happy to publish these in the next Half Circle. *Don*

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A Scottish woman went to the local newspaper office to place an obituary notice for her recently deceased husband. The editor informed her that there is a charge of fifty cents per word.

She paused, and then said "Let it read *Angus McPherson died*". The editor then told her that there is a seven word minimum for all obituaries.

The woman thought it over, and then said "OK, let it read:

*"Angus McPherson died.  
Golf clubs for sale"*

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