

# Half Circle

Number 8 - August 2007

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

## From the Desk of our OC, Claude Ducker:

### **The Viet Cong in a Kilt (Vietnam 1969)**

The story that follows may be insignificant compared with descriptions of the many heroic actions of the rifle platoons in Vietnam. But it is also true.

Not many members of Charlie Company may know that the official records show that in 1969 C Coy killed a Viet Cong wearing a kilt. That's official!

I recall a time when C Coy headquarters and one of our platoons had just based up after having been involved in ambush activity. We were at the western edge of the Nui Dinh (usually referred to as the Warburtons or Warbies). I had asked Jack Lake, our ever reliable CSM, to take a handful of CHQ Support Section to do a short term ambush in the nearby higher rocky area to our east. Jack took the likes of Guy Ansell and Barry Baker, not just your ordinary bunch of "Pogos". Shortly before darkness we heard firing and soon after Jack's group came back reporting that they had killed an enemy with an SMG who evidently was carrying a large bag of rice and medical supplies. The patrol brought back the SMG.

By the time I had a chance to talk to the CSM and send the obligatory contact report it was virtually dark and I couldn't read the pro-forma for the required contact report. Trusting to memory, I apparently overlooked sending a description in the sub-para referring to the dress (or clothing) worn by the enemy. A few minutes later a message came back from BHQ that I hadn't included what the VC was wearing. Perhaps feeling somewhat exasperated and ready to have something to eat at last I said to our sig "Tell them the enemy was wearing a kilt".

Around 1983, by which time I had long been out of the Regular Army, I was asked with a few other CMF officers to search through the unit war diaries at the Australian War Memorial so that we could delete the names of all Hoi Chans (enemy ralliers to our side). This was because by that time the Communist Regime in Vietnam had set up an embassy in Canberra and it was feared they would find the names in the War Diaries (once they were de-classified) and take retribution.

While our group was working around a large table a woman researcher working with us suddenly called out in all seriousness "I didn't know they had men from Scotland fighting with the VC". When I looked at the relevant war diary she was reading I found that BHQ had studiously passed my contact report unamended to HQ 1 ATF and they in turn had passed it to higher HQ. I just said "Yes - it must have been so".

Mr Ashley Ekins, the AWM's chief historian, told me recently that his third volume of the Official History of the conflict in Vietnam will now not be out until August 2008. However I wouldn't expect him to mention the Scot who fought for the VC until the latter was stopped in his tracks by the staunch men from CHQ.

I had another motive for accepting this research task on the war diaries as I wanted to take the opportunity to check the 5 RAR war diaries for the exact location where elements of C Coy were sprayed with Agent Orange. This was because I was due to appear before the Evatt Royal Commission on Agent Orange and wanted to ensure that our case was noted, and indeed C Coy was one of the few sub-units that the Commission accepted as having been sprayed.

Claude Ducker

Then there was the art critic, who looked at a painting, then his arm. Apparently he couldn't tell his arts from his elbow.

We found.....

**Ian Cooper (our Company Medic before Kevin Mulligan)**, lives Forrest Beach, overlooking the waters of Halifax Bay near Hinchinbrook Island (towards the coast from Ingham, Qld). Ian has hosted blokes like Geoff Ford and Mudeye Mulligan, and all have had success catching a good fish. Coop says "So what if we have crocs, sandflies, stingers and mossies, I'm not leaving!"

Caught up with.....

**Colonel (Ret) Roger Wainwright, President of the 5RAR Association.** Roger was in Sydney for the 5RAR Association Committee meeting on Jun 18<sup>th</sup>, and whilst too wet to hit a golf ball, Blue Schafer and I had a brew with him. Roger commanded 8PI (first tour), commanded a Company in 7RAR, was the first 2IC of 5/7RAR, and held a number of senior appointments. Roger's work for our Association is to be admired. He manages to fit this in around all his other commitments.

From Jack Bradd - direct from Hervey Bay in Qld - unedited!!!!!!!!!!!!

Had to get licences for a wheel chair and a geriatric motorbike, I reckon I wore my legs out in 5 RAR. The blokes gave me a klaxon horn to get rid of fat arse sheilas blocking the footpath but I like driving up silently behind ex diggers and giving them a blast, most of them come back to ground fighting so I take off. Some hoon hitched a ride squatting on a skate board, I couldn't see him so when I turned I ran over the silly bastard, there was no damage to the bike so I continued on. Some clown asked me why I fly the Aussie flag on my bike, I told him I couldn't get a Mexican one and the bastard wanted to fight me. I started wearing a fluoro jacket for crossing roads but it just makes me a better target for sheila drivers so I gave that up, you can see I'm having fun. There is a very strong vet community here in the Bay great blokes, us ex Tigers out number the rest of the BNs, and heaps of bloody sappers. They out number every one and us INF blokes cop heaps off them. They were hoeing into us one Sat morning at the RSL so I hooked in, I said the Latin word on their badge translates to 'Everywhere' that means they are in every battle and on every battle field and all the silly bastards do is get in the way of the Infantry.

We have an Uc-Da-Loi Corner established at the RSL and it is the meeting place for vets on Thursday and Saturdays, so if anyone is visiting keep those days in mind. Good to see the BN back on the Order of Battle.

And.....

I remember back in my Army days in the SGT Mess where we would invite old Diggers out for the day, give them a feed and a gutful of grog and listen to their warries. The RSL Sub Branch here at Hervey Bay does the same thing and guess what I'm invited, I'm officially an 'Old Digger'. My host and wheelchair driver is Mick Sinclair (PNR 5 RAR) but he's a mongrel, he will most probably put me on the escalator or lock me in the lift.

I'm a bit wary of these Vets because one ANZAC Day they told me to just put my hand up if I wanted to go to the pissaphone and one of them would wheel me. What I didn't know was they had a competition to see how fast each bloke could push me and how many blokes they could knock down. I felt like a kamikaze pilot as I sped to the toilet, it was terrifying. The President of the Sub Branch nearly won except he got me stuck in the toilet doorway, luckily he got me unstuck before a fight broke out among the blokes busting for a leak. Still it's great being officially an 'Old Digger'.



Jack

Ed's note: Have a good look at Jack's wheels – Our "tac sign" 59, and C1 are on there!

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Who are these blokes? Paul McQueen (Int Rep) sent these photos in, taken late 1969. Any ideas? Please let us know.



**WORLD'S GREATEST EXCUSE WHEN COMING HOME LATE FROM THE PUB:**

“Sorry love, I couldn’t get home any earlier. They had a competition to see who had the best wife, and you made it into the finals”.

**OUR LIST OF CONTACTS:**

“Half Circle” is designed to be an informal publication for those who served in C Coy 5RAR (2<sup>nd</sup> tour). We are supported by the 5RAR Association, and our Battalion website.

However, we haven’t caught up with all our fellow soldiers. We went to Vietnam with about 110 men. Allowing for those who paid the supreme sacrifice, the wounded, the sick, those whose military tenures had expired, transfers, etc, etc, we had approximately 150 men in C Coy. We have nowhere near that number of contacts on our list. Those we do have are (alphabetically, reading across):

Ansell, Guy	Baker, Barry	Bates, Terry
Blair, Greg		
Bourke, Ross	Bowman, Dave	Bradd, Jack
Conroy, Noel		
Cooper, Ian	Davis, Neal (Dartza)	Ducker, Claude
Dwyer, Ron (Fred)		
Ford, Geoff	Halliday, John (Doc)	Hamlin, Eric
Hellyer, John		
Herbert, Wayne	Hill, Russell (Kiwi)	Hooper, Bob
Hunter, John		
Hyde, Ellis (Bunny)	Jenkins, Chris	Knight, Peter
Lake, Jack		
Lambert, Roger	MacDougall, Andy	Magalas, Wally
Major, Terry		
Manhood, Dennis	McCarthy, Peter (Fred)	McKinnon, Sandy
McQueen, Paul		
Miles, Alan	Molloy, Peter	Morgan, Barry
Mulligan, Kevin		
Oram, Ben	Pearson, Geoff	Radwell, Mike
Reeks, Allen		
Riley, Alan	Schafer, Bryan (Blue)	Schmidt, Owen
Storm, Geoff		
Summerfield, Col	Swan, Euston (Swanny)	Taylor, Barrie
Teichelman, Don		

Titley, Bill

Wilkins, Dave

Williams, Barry

Winney, Phil

Yabsley, John

Youd, Mal.

This gives us just over 50 members. We still need about ninety of our mates. If you know of any C Coy (2<sup>nd</sup> tour) member, please send their name and email address to me at [rosdon@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rosdon@bigpond.net.au) . Nothing else required. **A number of previous email contact addresses have been deleted, as correspondence to them kept bouncing back.**

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**I have been asked.....**

If the members of C Coy (2<sup>nd</sup> tour) would consider a joint reunion with the members of C Coy (first tour). "A" Company seems to do this quite well. Whilst neither of the two groups wishes to lose its individual identity, is this idea feasible? **Your comments, please.** Note: this is an idea only, and **NO** plans have been made.

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**FROM THE 5RAR WEBMASTER:** We need some personal stories – no statistics needed. Please send any memories you have to Ted Harrison (he will edit them and check spelling), and acknowledge your contribution – c'mon – [www.5rar.asn.au](http://www.5rar.asn.au). Our website has had a lot of hits lately, and Ted is looking to expand it. This can only occur with your contributions.

**TAKE A BREAK IN TASSIE:**

An earlier edition of "Half Circle" mentioned the Veteran's Retreat at Dago Point, Interlaken, Tasmania. Kevin "Mudeye" Mulligan has provided a lot more information about this facility, and it sounds great! Suitable for everyone, Tassie scenery, and great fishing. I have passed all the details from Kevin to Ted Harrison for inclusion on the Battalion website, to be listed with "Cockscomb" and "Standown Park". Check it out – particularly you Sandgropers, Crow Eaters and Banana Benders. Depending on when you go, **SNOW** can be provided - [www.5rar.asn.au](http://www.5rar.asn.au).



I gave a mate of mine a light globe as a present. What a bright idea!

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