

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.

THIS IS A SPECIAL EDITION OF "HALF CIRCLE". IT IS 40 YEARS SINCE 7 PLATOON WAS DECIMATED ON 4TH JULY 1969 IN A MINE INCIDENT. LES PETTIT, PAUL SMITH AND HANS MULLER MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE, AND A FURTHER SEVENTEEN OF OUR SOLDIERS WERE VERY SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. Wayne Herbert was awarded the MID for his selfless courage in caring for his mates in the finest Australian military tradition.

On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of this disaster, members of 7 Platoon, their families, and supporting Arms gathered to remember.....

Bryan (Blue) Schafer reports.....

7 PLATOON C Coy 5 RAR

**40th
ANNIVERSARY REUNION**

AND

COMMEMORATION

4TH JULY 1969 – 4TH JULY 2009

I attended the 7 Platoon Commemoration held in Perth over the weekend of the anniversary of the mine incident in which we lost three great mates and many more injured for the rest of their lives.

On the Friday they had a meet and greet get together at the Perth RSL which seen a few of them come out of the woods to say hello. It was a great afternoon.

On Saturday morning they had a small march and service at the Vietnam Memorial in Kings Park which was one of the most moving ceremony I have ever attended. (It must be because I have fond memories of these men who died). Peter McHugh's wife Margie started to sing the National Anthem as we approached the memorial and all the wives and friends joined in, it was very emotional and moving. Dave

Mead read the service assisted by Chaplain David Cockram (Ex 3 RAR soldier from Vietnam).

On Saturday night everyone had dinner at the Oasis restaurant in the Swan Valley and the service and meal was excellent.

On the Tuesday they arranged a BBQ at a park on the outskirts of Perth and another great day was had by all. People came from all over Australia with Dave Mead coming from northern Italy, great effort by all concerned

Many thanks must go to Wayne Herbert and Terry Bates who put in a great deal of time to ensure that everything ran smoothly which it did.

Those who attended included Terry Bates & Barbara, Wayne Herbert & Marie, Mike Bolton & Helen, Peter McHugh & Margie, Dave Bowman & Julie, Kevin Mulligan and Daughter Yvonne, Geoff Ford, Dave Mead & Marina, Barry Taylor & Susie, Graeme Hill & Trish, Maurie Shiels, Doc Halliday & Maureen, John Williams & Robin, Jim Lowry & Leslie, Mike Brown, Jim Read, Blue Schafer & Arleen, Peter Guyatt & Glennis, Terry Fitzgerald and Dave Stone.

Other Bn members who attended are:

Alan McNulty & Marion, Russell Briggs, Ken Benson, Michael Nelleton, Dave Cockram and Ben a young naval sailor who played the bugle at the service and did a great job.



Kneeling from left. Mike Brown, Blue Schafer, John Williams, Dave Bowman, Terry Bates, and Mauri Shiels.

Standing from left; Ben Navy bugler, Wayne Herbert, Blue McHugh, Alan McNulty, Graeme Hill, Jim Lowry Mike Bolton, Dave Mead, Kevin Mulligan, and Barrie Taylor.



In the weeds - courtesy Tex Nevins

AT THE RAP:

Jack Lake - Two full knee reconstructions. Sue advises that Jack is now getting around on one walking stick - probably similar to the swagger stick he used to wave at us! Good luck Jack.

Wayne "Rouster" Stephens - Rouster is currently in the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle. He has had a rough trot with a number of medical problems. If anyone can get there to visit him, it would be appreciated. Get well mate.

Barry Morgan - Well Barry, a stent in the heart is better than a stint in the scrub. With best wishes from all of us.



Who comprises this motley crew from 8PI? Greg (Reverend) Parish, Tex Cunningham, Wayne (Rouster) Stephens, John (Tangles) Gardner and Geoff Pearson. Who are the two at the back?
Jack Bradd said.....WONDERFUL VUNGERS

The CSM had just given the COY the word that the use of Smoke Grenades was a UD (Unauthorised Discharge) then ordered us onto the trucks for the trip to Vungers and a couple of days rest. The CSM went around to each truck nominating an NCO to ensure no Smoke Grenades were thrown; I was nominated for my truck, so off we went. In the brilliant sunshine we passed many of the ARVIN posts and road workers we had gleefully Smoke bombed in the past, they were all smiles now because they must have got the word, no more Uc-da-loi Smoke bombs. On arrival in Vungers we were given the usual warnings about offences and the penalty for getting caught, the firing squad, then we were let loose into town. The town was a rest centre for Yanks, Koreans, Filipinos, Aussies, Kiwis, VC and NVA. Vungers had its own distinct smell with the aromas from the open drains, buffalo shit, restaurants and street stalls all mixing in to make the diggers hungry enough to eat anything, even hepatitis rolls.

Of course everyone visited the Yank PX where we would load down with our ration of six bottles of spirits then find some place to drink it. Myself and another digger were lucky enough to score a room in the old French Hotel; the Grand, then proceeded to demolish our bottles. I woke up during the night to find myself staring at one of the ugliest sheilas I have laid eyes on lying beside me, I didn't scream, just kicked her out of bed then went back to sleep. In the morning we were carrying out our ablutions when the mate warned me about the shower; the drain was blocked with about 2 inches of water in the shower cubicle and he got a shock from the light switch. I couldn't find my shoes anywhere and reckoned the sheila had knocked them off but when the mate was having a heart starter he found my shoes in the fridge freezer compartment, bloody sheila. It's a very weird feeling having frozen shoes on and very hard to walk in the bloody things. I told the floor papa-san about the shower and the light switch and watched in horror as he took off his Ho Chi Minh sandals, stepped into the water and grabbed the light switch, he was shaking and his hair stood straight up as I fled as fast as my frozen shoes and feet would allow.

But all too soon it was over and we had to say goodbye to the smells, the Bar girls, the grog, the kids trying to steal your watch and wallet, the hepatitis rolls and the pogos, ride pass the smiling ARVIN and road workers back into base to prepare for the next OP.



Jack Bradd and Tex Nevins showing a local bar girl how field signals can get the message across.



In Sydney and would like to hit a golf ball? Then sprint to the Georges River Golf Club, Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish (a Vietnam Vet) and his team will make your day with a good course, good food, and a cool ale. Phone 02 9724 1615. Vietnam Vets welcome.



FOUND..... David Mead. The 7PI reunion blokes, using all their investigative skills, have found their Platoon Commander. David Mead was and still is a very well respected and highly efficient officer. Word has it that Dave is now based in Italy, with his partner Marina. Glad to have you back on board Dave. Dave's work for the welfare of the underprivileged in third-world countries is another story. Ed's note: a bit of a submission from Dave for Half Circle would be most welcome.

SAD NEWS

We have just been advised that Mrs Pat Khan, wife of our CO, passed away last week. Every member of C Coy, and indeed 5RAR, extends our sincere sympathies to Colin Khan. May she rest in peace.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod (donharrod@bigpond.com), with help from Bob (Tex) Cunningham, Jack Bradd, Tex Nevins, Geoff Pearson, Blue Schafer, Terry Bates, Wayne Herbert, Barry Morgan