

Half Circle



Number 128 - August 2017

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.



VALE – 3794462 Private Donald Charles Teichelman

It is with regret that we advise that Don passed away on 11th July 2017. Don joined 9PL in August 1969 as a reinforcement, and carried out his duties as a Rifleman until 5RAR returned to Australia in March 1970. We all remember Don as a steady, reliable soldier, and an integral part of our force. We offer our sincere condolences to Gail and the family. Stand down old soldier, you have attended your final parade.

LEST WE FORGET

Ed's note: Bryan Schafer has advised that some 200 people attended Don's funeral, with C Coy represented by Ross Bourke, Phil Winney, Phil Greenhalgh, Fred Dwyer, Paul McQueen, Wally Magalas, Ben Oram, Eric Hamlin, Ken Leggett, Rod Zunneberg and Blue. C Coy (1st tour) was represented by Doug Bishop and Stretch Bryan. The photo below shows some of the C Coy members who attended:



AT THE RAP:

Kim Locke – here is an update from **Terry Major**: “I visited him today in Peel District Hospital, Mandurah WA. This is his second visit to hospital over the past 2 weeks, initially he fell over trying to go to the toilet at RSL Care and had to be taken to hospital by Ambulance suffering some cuts and bruises. He was in for 4 days and was returned to RSL Care, a few days later he has been taken back to hospital again this time with severe bronchitis. I’m not sure how long he will be there, He’s definitely not travelling too well. His daughter Karen was able to contact me through the Mandurah RSL to fill me in on what was happening, as you can imagine she is quite distressed as to where he goes from here”.

From Alan McNulty: Called down to Mandurah today to see Kim Locke - not a good day with bad weather. He is still in hospital with severe bronchitis, and is not too well. He had not touched his lunch, is looking very frail and sleeping a lot, he was asleep when I got there waited around then went and had a coffee, went back and he was still asleep. I asked the nurse could she pass on my card to him. I also mentioned that Kim served in 5RAR in South Vietnam. The staff did not know.

Ian Leis – shoulder surgery

Colin Summerfield – medical

As a mark of respect to the late Don Teichelman, and in consideration of his wife Gail's wishes, we are printing the second part of his article “My Story”:

3794464 PTE DON TEICHELMAN – MY STORY (Part 2)

Now I am well into operations with 9 Platoon. I remember having to lie in a foxhole full of rain for hours during ambushes. The times that you would be on patrol walking through the jungle, you would get a signal for a 5-minute smoko. You would sit on your pack, light up and watch the leeches heading towards you. You would kill the ones you saw, but the ones you didn't would be sucking your blood until they had their fill, then they would drop off. There were other nasties there like ticks. You couldn't see these coming until

someone told you that you had one on your body, or you would find one yourself. Now, with ticks, they burrow into your skin with their heads. To get them off you would have to put a cigarette ash close to them so they would drop off. I can remember at least five leaving their heads inside my skin.

When on operations we were normally resupplied every three days. These were carried out by helicopters. They would land and we would help to unload as quickly as possible due to the vulnerability of helicopters on the ground in enemy territory. I remember one particular time when we were on operation in the Nui May Tao's there was nowhere for choppers to land so they hovered as low as possible and proceeded to throw out our rations, narrowly missing several of us. After we had gathered all the broken cartons, we all received our share. We packed our packs, threw away our socks and put on the new ones which had been supplied.

On one particular operation, my platoon had to carry nine days of rations. These extras were for another platoon. We had to carry them some miles over rough terrain. Once, when walking through the bush, the digger in front dropped his rifle, threw off his pack and started rolling around on the ground. I knew he had been attacked by another Vietnam nasty – the red ant. I proceeded to help him rid himself of this biting pest. The red ant forms its nest by moulding several leaves on a tree or shrub into a ball and if anything passes this nest, they would swarm all over that person, biting ferociously.

The contacts that I can remember won't be in any chronological order. When on an operation you sometimes find tracks in the bush. These were used by the Viet Cong. On this operation, we stumbled upon a large track and we set up an ambush. This means we would conceal ourselves along the track, hoping that the enemy will move along it. We also set up Claymore mines facing along the track. These weapons were shaped like a small TV and when triggered would kill anything in front of it in a 60-degree arc up to 100 m away. They were fired electronically. This was a 9 Platoon ambush which consisted of three sections, each equipped with a M60 machine gun. Two guns would face the track and one protecting our rear. I was on this one. Before the ambush was tripped, claymores were detonating, and plenty of rifle fire as well. I can't begin to describe the way one felt – extreme fear and extreme alertness. The shooting stopped after a couple of minutes. We could hear moaning. It was wounded enemy. A couple of grenades were thrown to silence them.

Next, I, among others, was selected to do a walk through, i.e. we lined up in a line perpendicular to the track and walked through. This was done to secure the position. I was told to stop at a certain point. It was near a dead Viet Cong. Now I was quiet and motionless. I knew there was another of our men about three metres away. What I didn't know was that he had not noticed me, and as soon as I made a move he trained his M16 on me. Fortunately, he recognised me before firing. His name was LCPL Colin Mooney, if I recall correctly. I think the enemy body count was three on that occasion.

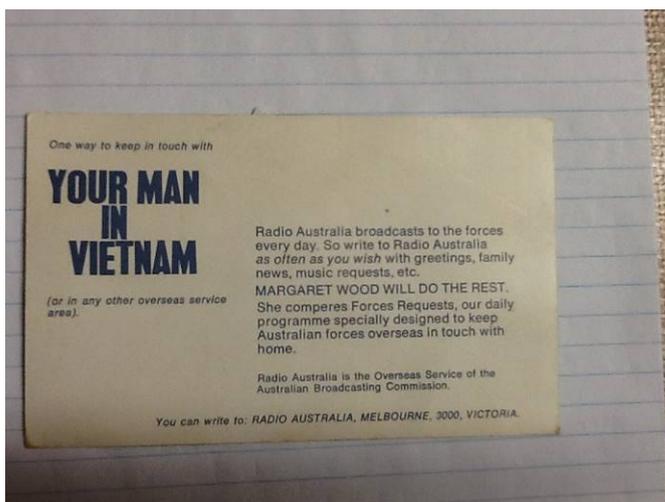
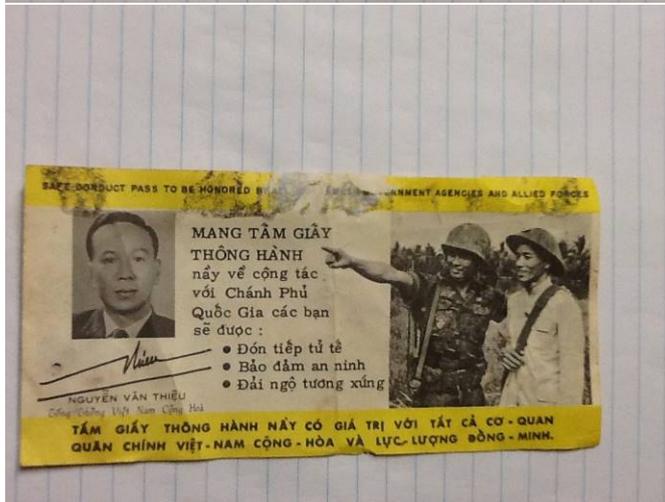
Ed's note: There is one correction to be recorded regarding Don's story (Part 1) – Reference was made to Don's arrival into C Coy, and his reporting to SGT Peter Knight. This was in fact

another SGT, not Peter. Apart from one-day LOB either side of his R&R leave, Peter attended all operations until his very serious wounding, which resulted in him being medically returned to Australia.



The Safe Conduct Pass.

Pictures courtesy of Ian Leis.



ABC Radio Australia – Announcer Margaret Wood broadcast a program where families and friends of serving diggers would convey messages and play requests. A much-appreciated contact with home, as there were no telephones, emails or other means of communications, other than letters.

Picture courtesy of Ian Leis.

DID YOU KNOW that the correct name of Paddy Cahill - our SGT Cook – was in fact ***Frederick Bernard Cahill?***

Spare a Thought for the Radio Operator (by Roger Lambert)

Much has been written about the Forward Scouts and the Machine Gunners of a Platoon, after all, they were the 'eyes and ears' and the firepower of the Section/Platoon. We all remember that the GPMG M60 weighed 23 lbs (10.4 kg) and that each linked belt of 100 rounds weighed 7 lbs (3.2 kg). The Machine Gunner usually had one link belt loaded on the gun and another two which were worn bandolier fashion across the shoulders. Additional link belts were distributed among the Section.

Without demeaning the vital roles of the Forward Scout and the Machine Gunner, we need to spare a thought for the equally vital role of Radio Operator. The operator carried the AN/PRC-25 radio set in addition to his personal weapon (7.62mm SLR or 5.56mm M16), rations and water supply as well as spare batteries for the radio.



The AN/PRC-25 Radio weighed 23.5 lbs (10.6 kg), heavier than the GPMG M60. It was however a very robust piece of equipment which was virtually shock proof as well as being water proof.

The radio's weakness however was the handset. The handset was similar to a telephone handset, with a "push to talk" bar. A hook on the back allowed the Radio Operator to hang the handset off his webbing. Importantly, the handset could simply not be allowed to get wet.

In a wet, humid, country like South Vietnam, this was a serious issue, one that could prove disastrous if the handset were to fail. The common way to deal with this inadequacy was to put the handset inside the clear plastic bag (usually the one from the radio battery's packaging or a ration pack) and fasten it in place with a rubber band. Despite its susceptibility to damp, the microphone in the handset was very sensitive; one could whisper into it and still be clearly heard.

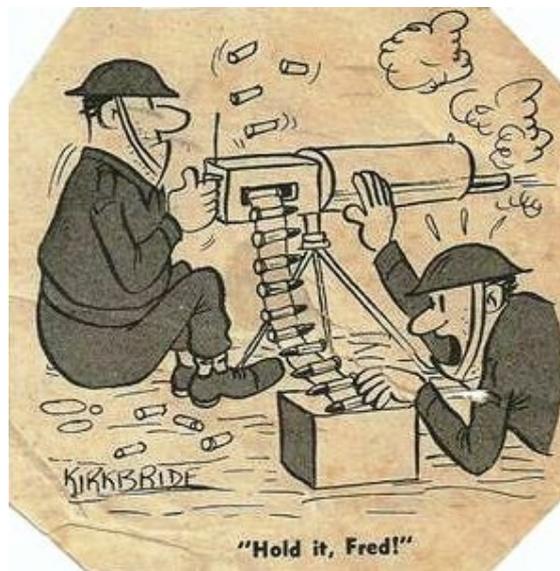
The AN/PRC-25 radio came with two antennae; the 3 feet (91.4 cm) AT-892 and the 10 feet (205 cm) AT-271. The short or regular radio antenna resembled a metal tape measure. The lower third or so was a round flexible tube that screwed onto the radio. The long-range antenna was carried in a canvas bag strapped to the side of the set. The radio had a transmission range, with the short antenna, of about 3-4 miles (6.5 kilometres); adverse terrain factors could influence this range. The long-range antenna was supposed to be good for up to 18 miles (29 kilometres).

DID YOU KNOW That the correct name of 5RAR's base in the Nui Dat Task Force area was *Ap An Phu*?

AMENDMENTS TO YOUR LISTS OF CONTACTS:

The Teichelman family will continue to use Don's email address - 3794462@gmail.com

Dennis (Digger) Nevins has a new email address – nevinsdennis@gmail.com



Q: What is Forrest Gump's email password? A: 1 Forrest 1.
(Blame John Smee, Transport PI for this one!).

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – donharrod@bigpond.com,
0418 423 313, including an article previously submitted by the late Don Teichelman, and help from
Peter Knight, Ian Leis, Roger Lambert, Bryan Schafer, John Smee, Dennis Nevins, **and powered by the
Lambs Valley Wine Company, Hunter Valley, NSW.**