

Half Circle

December 2006

An informal newsletter for the members of C Coy 5 RAR, 2nd Tour, South Vietnam, 1969-70, and especially for the families of those who are no longer with us.

Vale - CHARLES EDWARD STAMP - a tribute by Claude Ducker (Company Commander)

Many of you would have already heard the news that Charles "Chuck" Stamp died from Creutzfeldt - Jakob disease on 26th September 2006, after being hospitalised in July.

Chuck was commissioned into the Canadian Guards in 1963 and saw service in Germany and Cyprus. In 1967 he moved to Australia where he joined our Army. Initially he served as a sergeant at the Infantry Centre before being commissioned again in April 1968. He was then posted to 5RAR.

At 5RAR he became OC of 8PI in C Coy. Having later got to know some of the characters in that platoon when I joined the Company in Vietnam, I realize that this would have been a challenging period for Chuck. I understand from Bill Titley, the then 2IC of C Coy, Chuck applied himself with enthusiasm and resilience.

By the time I joined C Coy in Vietnam, Chuck was in Admin Coy. However, he temporarily returned as Admin Officer when Bill Titley went to Adjutant in August 1969, and continued in this role until David Wilkins joined the Company.

I recall that Chuck was a loyal officer who quickly and cheerily bounced back from any setbacks that he might have encountered. I also recall that he liked to accompany C Coy on operations rather than stay back at Nui Dat, and was with us when we were comprehensively sprayed with "Agent Orange" in August in the Hat Dich. Typically, Chuck took this with good humour.

He went on to serve 20 years in our Army in a variety of unit and staff postings including ground liaison with the RAAF (where they presumably coped somewhat with his Canadian accent). After leaving the Army he became the manager of the Guild of Furniture Manufacturers in Queensland.

Chuck is survived by his wife Leigh, whom he married ten days after returning from Vietnam, his daughter Rachael and son Sean. It was great that during Chuck's last year both his children were married and that he experienced his first grandchild.

At Chuck's funeral, Kel Ryan, the Queensland representative of the 5RAR Association gave the Eulogy and a 5RAR sash was placed on the coffin. The mourners included several former members of 5RAR. Some of these had also visited Chuck in hospital, some travelling long distances, for example Geoff Pearson coming from Sydney.

Leigh Stamp has written to me to say that the support and friendship from the 5RAR family during his illness and subsequent death has been "incredible" and "overwhelming". She does not have the addresses of everyone who contacted her, so has asked me to use this opportunity to convey her thanks to all those concerned.

Claude Ducker

THE LORD'S INFANTRY

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and the Infantry. And God saw the Infantry, and indeed it was very good.

And God spoke unto the Infantry: "Be tactical and proficient and rule the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over birds of the air, and over all key terrain."

And it came to pass that the Infantry called upon their God: "Oh Lord, help us, for we are weary."

And the Lord took mercy upon them, for lo! Key terrain was abundant throughout the land. And he raised up the weakest of the Infantry and set upon them beasts of burden and called them Armour. And God saw the Armour and indeed it was mediocre. And the Infantry and the Armour dwelt in the land therein.

And it came to pass that the Infantry again called out: "Oh Lord, help us, for we are weary."

And the Lord heard their words and loaded with favour upon the Infantry, for they were blessed. The Lord reached among their number and chose those with bums like base plates and mouths that spat fire, and called these Artillery, And God saw the Artillery and indeed, it too, was mediocre. And the Infantry, Armour and Artillery dwelt in the land therein.

But it came to pass that the Infantry again called upon the Lord: "Oh Lord, help us, for we are weary."

And the Lord heard their voices and stretched out his hand and touched those of Armour and Artillery of small minds and called these Ordnance, Survey, Signals and Pay Corps. He stretched out his hand again and touched those with lengthened arms and called them Military Police. And he touched those with light heads and called them Aviation, and those which were filled with greed were called Quartermasters, and those which were sickly and called these Medics, and those who hid themselves in darkness and called these Intelligence, and those who burped mud and called these Engineers. And God saw all that he touched and he knew they were touched. And the Infantry and the others dwelt in the land therein.

But it came to pass that the Infantry again called out: "Oh Lord, help us, for we are weary."

And the Lord looked upon the Infantry with anger and the Heavens roared with thunder and the skies burned with fire. And God spoke: "How could thou yet be weary? I have given thee Armour and Artillery and a host of others to provide support for thee."

And the Infantry humbled themselves before the Lord and answered: "Oh Lord, it is of them that we are weary."

And the Lord smiled upon the Infantry and forgave them, for he understood that of which they spoke.

For they were the Infantry, and were truly blessed by God!

Anon (**With thanks to Roger Lambert**)

MEMBER PROFILES:

Roger Lambert. Lives in Sydney, NSW. Called up for National Service in April 1966 and retired from the Army in 1992 as a Lt Col after 26 years service. Roger took a 12 month break from work to renovate the family home, and then joined the NSW Environment Protection Authority in 1994. Following a restructure, and amalgamation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Resource NSW in 2003, the agency became the Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW. At present, Roger is the Director Administration and Facilities for the DEC. Besides impossibly long working hours, current activities include continuing to support the family in the manner to which they have become accustomed (retirement is but a pipe dream), drinking red wine and single malt scotch (not necessarily at the same time), supporting the Knights and Sydney Swans, supporting the Holden Racing Team and when time permits, constructing scale model aircraft and failing miserably with cryptic crosswords.

(Probably the only platoon commander to be strung up by his boots to the rafters when, as the Duty Officer, he had the temerity to try to close the Charlie Company diggers boozier during the 1969/70 tour). Ed's note: Roger is totally committed to the environment - otherwise he would be drinking DOUBLE MALT.

Bob Hooper. Lives Oyster Bay NSW. Joined C Company as reinforcement mid way through the tour. Returned to Holsworthy & left army start of 71. Joined Pascol Paints & worked in the technical area for 27 years until retired. Spends time fishing for blackfish and flathead, and almost ready to start working the blue swimmer crabs in the bay. Has caravanned to Nth Qld the last three winters, and met many vets on the road. Attends Sutherland Leisure Centre gym where a group of vets still gather after completing the heart moves program. *Tight lines Bob!*

Barry Williams. Barry admits to having run off the rails after the return from our tour of Vietnam, but picked up the bits, re-joined, and completed a tour with AATTV, then a posting to 1RTB. Now living in Ipswich, his family includes eight children, 18 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. He has also battling cancer. Barry's main interests are the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club, and his home computer (bungy05@bigpond.net.au). If anyone can help out with a platoon photograph featuring Barry from Kapooka, May 1968, it would be most appreciated. *On yer, Baz, keep smiling!!*

Euston Swan (Swanny). Left the army as soon as he got back from Vietnam in 1970. Back to tyre fitting in Quirindi for 3 years, 10 years in a Stock and Station Agency, 4 years managing a family property and the last 21 years running his own business (milk run) in Woy Woy on the NSW Central Coast. Married with four children, one grandchild with another on the way. Looking forward to retirement in the near future so he can do some travel and learn to relax and enjoy the family. Has a 1975 LH Torana he wants to spend time rebuilding. *Now we know how you could carry such a heavy load Swanny - it was the milk!*

Greg Blair. Lives in Wollongong, and retired in August 2002. My lifestyle is centred around the family, which includes the grandchildren. Main interests are golf and fishing. I would love to hear from my old 5RAR mates. *Living in the "Gong", what a great place to keep your fishing skills sharp, Blairy!!*

K. Barrie Taylor. Lives Parkdale, Melbourne. Managing Director/Owner/Importer of Ball and Roller Bearings company. Interests include golf, fishing, drinking and (sorry Barrie, can't print your other interest!). Slowed down a bit on all these activities. *Haven't we all?*

Alan Riley. Lives Cremorne, Sydney. Left the Army in 1970 and returned to the Bank. Undertook a degree in business and went through the CPA criteria and became an accountant. Currently working at University of Technology Sydney. Happily married to a gorgeous woman. Presently going through second childhood having tried a skydive (tandem), bungy jumped Nevis in NZ, and running the RX8 at Wakefield Park and Eastern Creek when time off work allows. Enjoy my work, beer, wine, Italian food, (let's face it - enjoy just about any food). I am enjoying life to the full. Daughter just married so chance I could become a grandparent next couple of years. *Ed: Al, remembering your size from many years ago, it's really hard to see how you like food - I don't want to be there to catch you when you bungy jump!*

Ron (Fred) Dwyer. Lives Hackham West, Adelaide. Discharged Feb 1970 after winning a holiday overseas (some called it National Service). Worked at Hills Industries as a Tube Maker, then a Production Manager. Have a passion for sport, played football, cricket, golf & enjoy fishing. Planning to retire Aug 2007, spending the kids inheritance with my wife Wendy playing golf, boating, fishing & travelling our wonderful country with the occasional sortie overseas. Married to Wendy for 33 yrs, & we have 2 sons Shane (married) & Andrew (soon to be married) no grand children yet, we both enjoy all the good things SA has to offer, quiet lifestyle, great wine districts, good golf courses, King George whiting & the Adelaide Crows. One of my best moments since army life was the Friday night of the first 9 platoon (Hervey Bay) reunion meeting up with the diggers after 33 yrs. It was an indescribable experience & set the scene for all 3 reunions since.

Don Harrod. Lives Moorebank, Sydney. Left the Army in 1976, joined the RSPCA NSW. Stayed for 18 years, 12 as deputy CEO. Joined a large manufacturing company, controlled the stores for 5 years, then assumed the role of Safety Officer for another 6 years, creating and implementing safety systems, rehabilitation, etc. Retired. Now spends time with wife of 35 years, Roslyn, goes outback fishing, plays very average golf, enjoys putting on weight, and continues his quest to find the perfect beer. *Cheers!*

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CHURCH BLOOPERS:

Bertha Belch, a missionary from South Africa, will be speaking at our church tonight. Come and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7.00pm in the Presbyterian Church on Thursday. Please enter via the large double door at the side entrance.

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MISSING MEMBERS:

If you know of any member of C Coy not on our distribution list, please let me know their contact details. Some mail has bounced back. I will also contact the 5RAR Association Memberships Officer on your behalf to assist in maintaining current records of contact addresses and emails.

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BEER. Funny stuff. It can make you feel crook. It can make you feel good again too.

NOMINAL ROLL OF VIETNAM VETERANS:

Have a look - go to Google, pages from Australia, type in Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans, and follow the prompts. All you need is a regimental number or name. Pretty interesting, I've already found that one so-called veteran does not exist. The DVA site will also get you there.

Remember - some days you are the bug. Other days you are the windscreen.

NASHO'S, REO'S AND REGS

Bob Hooper recently attended a Lifestyle seminar, and spoke to another Tiger about how Reo's (reinforcements) were received into individual companies of the Battalion. This prompted some thought, so I contacted the Webmaster Ted Harrison, who assisted in the compilation of an article on the 5RAR Website. Please check this out, and your input / thoughts will be most appreciated. Ted has posted this in the "Once We Were Soldiers" section.

Early Troop Transport?

WE FOUND:

Kevin Mulligan - Tasmania
Bill Waters - Walbundrie, NSW
Barrie Taylor - Melbourne, Vic

Two lovers stood on Sydney Bridge
Her lips were all a quiver
He kissed her and his leg fell off
And floated down the river.

"Doctor, I feel like a cup of tea". "Sit down and stop stirring".

5RAR website: www.5rar.asn.au

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REMEMBER.....

Christmas 1969. The battalion was back at Ap An Phu from operation KINGS CROSS, and we had Christmas Dinner in the C Coy Diggers Mess. Full marks to the OC, David Wilkins in arranging for the CO, Colin Khan to enjoy the festivities with us, and also to our Sergeant Cook, Paddy Cahill for resisting the urge to celebrate too heavily before the Christmas fare was served.

I also recall that we had a problem with beer stocks. We took the decision to trade our stocks of VB with the Yanks, in order to have enough for the Christmas period. We were able to trade our grog for Budweiser and Schlitz - bloody awful, but we got two cartons of theirs for every one of ours.

The Christmas break was a very short one, and David Wilkins (the Angry Ant, as he was affectionately known) was coping with severe manpower shortages, and the massive task of maintaining morale, due to the length of operations and his troops becoming very tired. He never let on. His attitude was typical of the spirit of C Company, from the OC, right through to the newest Digger.

On that note, it is probably a good opportunity to convey the very best of Christmas wishes to you and your families, and may 2007 be kind to you.



Don Harrod
The Pirate
December 2006

STOP PRESS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! The next issue of "Half Circle" will have a special article by CSM Jack Lake - "How to be nice to young Diggers". (Only joking, some things just CAN'T be done!).
