

Half Circle

Number 36 - December 2009

(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.

VALE - 2790351 Pte Ian John (Jacko) Jackson - 7 Platoon

As advised, "Jacko" died last week following a long illness. He was a good, steady bloke, and will be missed by the C Coy family. We will remember that he was seriously wounded in the 7Pl mine incident on 4th July 1969, and stayed on with C Coy after his wounds had been treated. Due to the trauma of the incident, Jacko remained at our Ap An Phu (Nui Dat) base, as the hygiene rep. Does anyone have a photo of Jacko? We need it to forward to the 5RAR Website, and for Tiger Tales. Please have a look and let Don know.



MERRY CHRISTMAS! Here is a flashback from 40 years ago. (Thanks to Roger Lambert).

An Infantry Drug Problem - Contributed by Paul McQueen

I was lucky. Arriving in Vietnam as a 20 year old Reo, and getting a job with many parts to it, meant I had less exposure to this drug. I confess to being under its influence at times, but fortunately, a lot less than many of my mates & fellow soldiers. The Officers & NCOs had their share too.

Although there was a hint of it not long after I arrived, my first time was out on a 3 day TAOR patrol. Then there was exposure from time to time, and a more constant supply when I replaced Barry Morgan in C Company, after he was WIA. I think they gave me his share.

I was lucky. I had a Sergeant who picked up on it and sorted me out about it. He gave me a good insight into its impact and its after effects.

I'm talking about a drug called Adrenalin.

On your first patrol, you're totally pumped up, just being in a Free Fire Zone. That's an area where technically you can shoot on sight. Get them, before they get you. You're thinking the equivalent of being at Paint Ball, except its live Ammo.

It doesn't take long before you start to wear yourself out. Being pumped up and on edge for hours on end takes its toll. You learn to get your head around it, and realize there isn't someone behind every tree.

Once you get it into perspective and settle in, it mainly only hits you when you have a Contact, or when there is good reason to believe one is imminent.

The drug is produced instantaneously. It does give you speed, reflexes, strength and the highest degree of alertness, and you can go at it like a bat out of hell for some time. After, you can be left drained.

Like many drugs, it has its good and bad points. While it lifts and assists at the moment of crisis, its production and application, takes toll of your energy.

This drug was both a friend and foe for the Infantry in Vietnam.

Some Observations from Dave Wilkins:

Adrenalin is a hormone that exhilarates the heart-rate whilst contracting the blood vessels and air passages in response to a threat, actual or perceived. It can cause responses in a person varying from standing and fighting, to freezing with fear or fleeing in terror. The training and discipline instilled in our soldiers is what we hope will make them stand and fight. As the modern-day American hero, David Hackworth said, in *About Face, The Odyssey of an American Warrior* (at page 76) when referring to battle with the enemy:

"... you use up a lot of adrenalin, generating a lot of fear- and fear dries you out.
... When you're fighting you're scared. And it's such an all-pervasive sort of fear that you can't even pinpoint what the feeling is. It's a gnawing, churning in the gut. You become so afraid that it's as if you're not afraid at all. And that's what bravery is. It's not fearlessness; it's the ability to get off your ass and charge when your mouth is dry, your gut is tight, and your brain is screaming 'Stay down!'.
... Bravery is being the only one who knows you're afraid."

No doubt when you began reading Paul's article, like me, you may have thought initially that he was referring to another drug such as marijuana, cocaine or heroine. He wasn't of course but it raises an interesting point. When you and I served in South Vietnam in the 1960s it was my observation that Australian soldiers were generally not very interested in such drugs, whilst our American allies were actively involved. Australian soldiers may have had the odd puff of marijuana when on leave, but most seemed uninterested in that or the harder drugs. Also to my observation, Australian society (including our Defence Force) was, generally speaking, about 10 years behind the Americans in its drug habits, so that it really wasn't until the late 1970s that Australian society was following that trend. Grog was a different matter of course and very likely we led the way.

Blonde Password

During a recent password audit by her bank, it was found that a blonde was using the

following password: MickeyMinniePlutoHueyLouieDeweyDonaldGoofy

When asked why such a big password, she said "Well you told me it had to be at least 8 characters long".



THE C COMPANY BOOZER - THE MUSHROOM CLUB - 1969

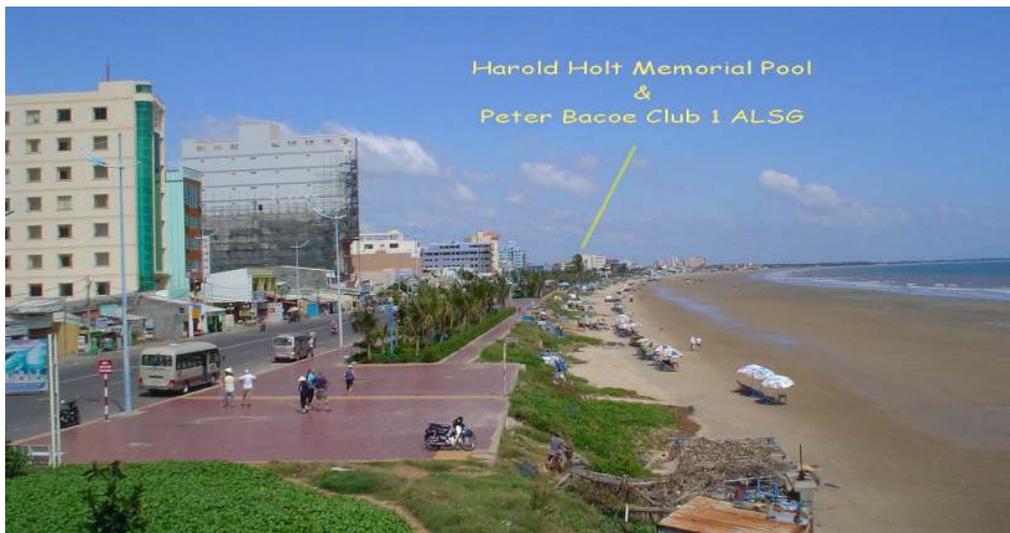


**ALCOHOL - are you using it to drown your problems, or are you irrigating them?
If so, how about seeking a bit of help?**

A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR:

I have been advised that one of the C Coy blokes (who is not well), in a message to another old colleague, commented on how he looks forward to receiving his "Half Circle". This is pretty gratifying, as the whole concept of "Half Circle" was to establish a means where we can still communicate, regardless of our geographical or other circumstances. To get feedback like that only means that we ALL have to try and contribute a bit more. Please keep your submissions coming. If I can't use them, I'll let you know. Don

Bob Hooper sent these pictures of Vung Tau today - AMAZING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Ed's note: Sure is a lot different to buying a dozen cans (already opened), or getting a set of clothes from "Botany Bay Tailors" at the Badcoe Club.



"Half Circle" is supported by the Georges River Golf Club, Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall (Sydney). If you are in Sydney, call in for a game, a feed or a beer. All veterans are most welcome.

OUR BOOK - THE YEAR OF THE TIGERS - 5RAR in VIETNAM 1969-70:

You would all be aware that the third edition of "The Year of the Tigers" has now been published, and is available for purchase through the 5RAR Association - 5rar.asn.au . Only two things can be said - (1) congratulations to Dave Wilkins on a mammoth effort to compile and edit the new, much larger publication; and (2) why haven't you got your copy yet?

FROM THE EDITOR:

Christmas 2009. Is it really 40 years ago that we were in Nui Dat for a three day break? David Wilkins invited the CO and RSM to attend C Coy as our guests on Christmas Day. A few things come to mind: Kevin Mulligan producing "Bunny San", Thommo "finding" some rabbit food, the 9PI blokes giving the CO a nip of Brandy in a tin cup - the CO's comment: "I think it might be St Agnes", the closeness and humidity of our ORs mess during Christmas Dinner, the tradition of the officers and Sergeants serving the meal to the diggers, the cool amber-coloured beverages, the prickly heat, and camaraderie that cannot be either explained to outsiders or repeated. **Merry Christmas everyone**, and may 2010 be kind to you. Don

Russell (Kiwi) Hill said: Turned on my Sat Nav and it said 'Bear Left' and there was the zoo. How good is that?

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - donharrod@bigpond.com, (02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with help from Roger Lambert, Paul McQueen, David Wilkins, Geoff Ford, Bob Hooper, Kiwi Hill and crook humour.