

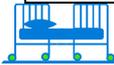
Half Circle



Number 72 - December 2012

(If this is hard to read, try increasing the picture size!!)

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.



AT THE RAP: Eddie Moon - ongoing treatment.

DAVE'S DIARY:

Continued from the previous edition of Half Circle.

My diary entries are in *italics* whilst additional data from Battalion and Task Force logs, as well as explanatory or descriptive commentary, are in plain text:

25 January 1970

It was time to concentrate the company, take a resupply and speak with the men. I had some concerns...

I am concerned about the soldiers becoming obsessed with how "short" they are in time before RTA (the battalion's scheduled departure from Vietnam for Australia was 27th February) and constantly reminding each other by using the term "-days and a wakey" [a wake-up]. This has the effect of increasing their awareness of possible injury if enemy contact occurs, and reduces aggressiveness. As soon as we reduce our aggressiveness in contacts (by quick hard-hitting follow-ups, and patrolling), the enemy is given more opportunity to inflict greater casualties upon us. That's war.

It is a bit similar to playing a game of rugby half-heartedly: you are invariably injured.

So, the expression "-days and a wakey" has been banned within the company until the end of the operation. One doesn't expect to stop the blokes from thinking about home, but the attempt to keep their minds on the existing job must be done, and so prevent them from switching off and getting themselves hurt.

C Company was still operating in the Mây Tào Mountains and, although the expression was now forbidden till we were back in Nui Dat, it was indeed just “32 days and a wakey”, that is, 32 days and a wake-up before we left Vietnam to RTA [return to Australia].

Weeks later the intelligence annex to 5RAR’s report of Operation Bondi 2 made reference to the enemy contacts we had in the Mây Tào Mountains and the consequences, as follows:

K76A Hospital Unit

5. Again, as in 6RAR’s previous operation in the NUI MAY TAO, this unit was contacted on several occasions in the same area. Documents revealed that this unit is now totally ineffective due to total disruption of their communications and supply routes and the loss of their medical stores.

Documents captured on the body of the Adjutant K76A revealed that the remnants of the unit, possibly up to twenty strong, have moved into BINH TUY Province in the area of NUI BE and are desperately short of food.

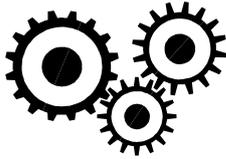
6. An indication of the poor state of Viet Cong communications is seen in the fact that the loss of K76A, although directly subordinate to HQ MR7, was not reported to units such as 274 Regt in the HAT DICH, and these units were still sending their casualties to K76A although K76A had been ineffective for two months.

(To be continued)

WANTED - A VOLUNTEER WITH A BIT OF TIME ON HIS HANDS

As briefly mentioned in the last edition of *Half Circle*, Gary Townsend (editor of *Tiger Tales*, Webmaster of the “Mushroom Club” and a member of 7 Platoon first tour), has very kindly offered to expand the “Mushroom Club” website to cover ALL of C Coy, both tours of Vietnam. Gary has an area of his website dedicated to THEN AND NOW, which has photos of diggers in 1966-67, and current photos. **What we now need** is someone who is a little bit computer literate who can receive photos from all of us, edit them to a standard size, and maintain a file of these for passing on to Gary. Any takers? Please contact me if you think you can help. Thanks, Don. PS: you can access the Mushroom Club website through the 5RAR website, and look for the heading Sub-unit websites on the home page.

WEARING OF THE RETURNED FROM ACTIVE SERVICE BADGE: Jack Lake, who is also the president of the Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans' Association, has advised that there is a protocol for the wearing of the RAS Badge. If you are in civilian attire (suit, etc), you are entitled to wear your badge to signify that you are a returned serviceman. If you are wearing your medals, you would **NOT** normally wear your RAS badge, as your medals already signify that you are returned. Thanks Jack - Ed.



"COGS IN THE WHEEL" - THE SECTION COMMANDER

Being a Section Commander in camp was a real pain - you were a target for every job which required a NCO, so if you were smart you would make yourself scarce. When the time came to go on operations, it was a great relief. The procedure was something like this:

1. Warning Order - this involved timings such as O Groups, No move before,
2. O Group. All SECTCOMDS were given orders by the PLCOMD containing Mission, Movement to, Timings, LOBs, ammunition, etc. The SECTCOMD then prepared and gave his Section orders. This was followed by an allocation of ammunition by the SECT 2IC (in my time in C Coy I had two excellent 2ICs - Barry Baker and Andy Macdougall, but the bastards would slip into my allocation of ammo some of the strangest ordnance I had ever seen; but it made a noise and hurt people so I carried it.

On OPS it was great being the lead SECT, navigating while working with the scout. This was real infantryman's work. Being the second or last SECT in the PL was no bludge as the field signals were constantly moving between the SECTS. I hated being 2nd or 3rd SECT as some of the strangest and insane field signals ever witnessed would come down the line. When stopping for the night we would receive orders from the PLCOMD about the next day's work. These would be passed onto the SECT then night routine would start. If there was any firing at night, I would simply pull my silk over my head and I was safe.

So, apart from the occasional NCO IC Work Party in camp, navigating, commanding the SECT in a fire fight, arming Claymores and carrying heaps of extra ammo in the weeds, it was a pretty easy job as a SECTCOMD. What does however stick in my mind was the utter joy of being able to use your voice and make as much noise as you could when in contact because everything was done in silence while patrolling, harbouring or ambushing.

Warren (Jack) Bradd, OAM

Next month: The Company Sig, aka the Company Radio Operator

WHO CAN ANSWER THIS? Barry Baker asks a question that may have puzzled most of us:

Can anybody explain why on the Vietnamese Campaign Medal ribbon is the clasp "1960-", when all the records now say that the Vietnam war began in 1962?



Two Australian tourists were travelling in Asia when some monkeys stole their Travellers Cheques. They ran up to their tour guide, yelling "Mr Wong, Mr Wong, some monkeys stole our travellers cheques". Mr Wong replied "Oh no, what kind were they?" The tourists replied "Brown ones with red bums!"

7 and 8 PLATOON BANK ACCOUNT. GEOFF PEARSON REPORTS:

Back in 1994, numerous members of 7 and 8 Platoons decided to start a bank account to provide funds for funerals, wreaths, etc for members of those platoons. The initial contribution was \$252, and as at today, the balance is about \$570. No withdrawals have been made from this fund, and it seems unlikely that there will be. The generosity of members when attending funerals of colleagues has not required any support from this fund.

What we need is members of 7 and 8 Platoons to have a think about what should be done with these monies - how can they be best used - what is the fairest distribution method - who can benefit, etc, etc. If nothing is done, NSW Government Consolidated Revenue will be the recipient.

One suggestion has been that a trophy (only if unanimously supported by all those members of 7 & 8 Pls) be dedicated to recognise those men who served in C Company in 1969/70, or perhaps for individual achievement, or other circumstances. This is only a suggestion, and needs to be kicked around.

The men of 7 and 8 Pls will have the final decision as to how these funds are to be used. They own the funds, and have absolute discretion. Please seriously consider this matter, and send your thoughts to your editor. They will be passed on to Geoff Pearson, who will consult with those diggers concerned, and a decision taken.

PLEASE DON'T STAND BACK ON THIS OCCASION, GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS, AND ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON YOUR BEHALF.

IN THE NEXT EDITION OF HALF CIRCLE:

1. Bob Hooper admits to being the provider of many of these rotten jokes that appear in this newsletter.
2. The name of a bloke who bothered to let us know his change of address and email details.

ROSLYN AND I WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - donharrod@bigpond.com (02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with help from Jack Bradd, Geoff Pearson, Jack Lake, Bob Hooper, Barry Baker, and Dave Wilkins.