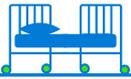


Half Circle



Number 156 - December 2019

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: Peter Commerford, Barrie Taylor, Colin Summerfield (two falls, then pneumonia), Terry Major (double heart bypass), Vince Feenstra. We send our best wishes to our mates who are not as well as they would like to be.



Remembrance Day 2019 – Hervey Bay, Qld

Barry Baker, Bill Titley and Ben Oram

FROM JOHN HUNTER – REMEMBERING TED SUTTOR:

Saturday 16th November around 8.25am every year is a special time for a few of us to remember. 50 years ago, on the 16th November 1969 Ted Suttor was killed and Peter Knight was shot during an engagement in a thick forest in Vietnam. I was there also between them and saw vision that will stay with me forever. I made the commitment that on the 50-year mark and time I would be with Ted in his home town of Orange NSW to remember.

Attached are photos of my visit to see Ted's memorial which is in the Canobolas Gardens Crematorium (Niche HH 32) in Orange NSW. It was also good to see in the centre of town a Memorial to all the soldiers who died in all the wars who came from Orange, Ted Suttor was well featured.

I have attached photos of Ted's plaque in the crematorium and it's good to see someone must visit the site as it's in very good condition. I hope all of us took time to think about Ted on the 16th November 2019. 50 years on and not forgotten. Lest we forget.



DENNIS (Digger) NEVINS' DIARY – 7th November 1969

Call Sign 6-1 [Tracker PL] made contact last night and called in buku Artillery, they got no results. A water party was sent out this morning back to where we were yesterday at the swamp, the blokes bought back 3 full bottles per man.

At 0900hrs we shook out and after 250 yard's we came to a Fire Trail, we then harboured on the edge of it. Bowies 2 section left on a Recce, only 100 yards from here they found a small number of tracks, they think they're as fresh as this morning. We all saddled up again and moved to 2 Section carrying their big packs and harboured in bunkers. I must say these bunkers are bloody well built.

After lunch myself, Bazza Baker, Sgt Doc Halliday, Reeves [Sig] and Jocks 3 Section left on a Recce to see if we could locate more bunkers or tracks, but nothing was found, we returned to the Platoon. Then our Section and the Boss left on another Recce, after 40 yards we came across more bunkers and tracks. Jack got us into extended line, he then told a digger (call him H) who had the M79 to follow up behind us, if we were to get into the stoush he was told to lob bomb's over us to our forward area. We swept through going from bunker to bunker, the area stunk of fresh Nogs, we went on through half the bunkers then propped.

We looked around for *H* - he should have been behind us, so we called and searched around and still no *H*, eventually he came out, he was still back where we started , well Jack blew his brain and he was right to do so, what *H* had to do was pure common sense.

We moved back to Company, it was then decided that the rest of the bunkers had to be searched, so once again we saddled up and shook out to continue the search. This time we came across 2 more bunkers, they were clear. On the first sweep we came across some dixies and sandals beside a tree, but on this sweep they were gone so there was at least one Nog. Once past the bunkers Jack got us into single file, Bazza saw a tree move and the rustling of bushes on the left, I didn't see movement but heard it, we waited and listened, it was one of those tense moments, we moved over to the area, there was a track but no enemy, maybe it was the bloke who collected his dixies and was making a break for it. At least on this sweep *H* made sure he kept up behind us. We moved back to Company and are harboured in the bunkers 2 Section found this morning.



DENNIS (Digger) NEVINS' DIARY – 19th November 1969.

The Battalion now has 31 kills this Operation.

Alfa Coy 6

Bravo Coy 10

Charlie Coy 6

Delta Coy 5

Support Coy 4

Call Sign 1-1 [1 Platoon] killed 1 last night plus a possible, also 11 Platoon was receiving Gun fire last night.

As for us Jack was on first piquet last night, I was lying beside the Gun on a bed of leaves, Barry Williams came around for a yarn as he couldn't sleep. Around 1945hrs we heard noises about 60 yards to our front, most probably where the Tank tracks were, we listened to it for 15 minutes, I wanted to listen a little longer to determine what we were hearing. Jack made

a decision and told me to blow the furthest Claymore, I picked up the clacker and let her go while Jack engaged with my Gun. Jack was all aggressive but his rounds were going about 6 feet high over the target area, when he finished the first belt, I told him to give the Gun to me, Jack rolled away and I took over.

We weren't getting any return fire, Jack wanted me to pull back 10 yards to get behind a log, as it was, the Gun was in the open but it was a good firing position looking down the track. The 3 of us pulled back as the Boss came up to us, we then told him what was happening. The jungle was noisy with the dropping of water on leaves it was making it difficult to hear enemy movement. Then we thought we could hear noise or movement on the track, we all hooked in, I put in a 75 round burst down the track while the Boss fired a couple M79s out 25 yards near the first Claymore.

Then our right flank opened up, that was Snow, Roy and blokes from 2 section they were getting return fire from 3 positions, I wanted to get the Gun around there and blaze the area but Jack said to stay put but he went to the flank and fired White Phosphorus and M26 Grenades from the SLR, after which things seemed to cease.

The Boss who was still with me in my Gun position was calling in Artillery, he was walking it in quite close and we were getting dead shrapnel. The Boss then returned to PHQ, before leaving he said each hour he wanted 20 rounds fired down the track. I carried out the first piquet, when the first hour clicked over it was dead quiet, I didn't think we needed to be firing, but the boss gave the order. I grabbed Bazza's M16 and fired 20 single shots down the track, I felt guilty as I knew the Diggers were trying to get some sleep. When the next piquet took over, we decided things were silent and shooting every hour wasn't needed. We carried out normal piquets for the rest of the night 1 on 5 off, none of us got any sleep, myself I kept on waking up.

The sweeping party went out this morning but found nothing except for some footprints, we were a little pissed off as we felt certain there may be a body or a blood stain. Some blokes said there were no Nogs but four blokes on the flank saw the flashes of return fire, that's good enough for me.

Our Section along with the Boss carried out a Recce on the Centurion Tank track but there were no footprints, we then returned to Platoon, then 2 Section carried out a Recce with no results.

The OC gave the order for a Tactical withdrawal which seemed odd, really no bloke gave a stuff, Jocks 3 Section led out followed by 1 Section, PHQ, 2 Section then CHQ. We moved to a resupply area 2000 yards away, on the way we came across bunkers but they were old, we got to the resupply area at 1400hrs and harboured. The rations were 4 day, 1 light, 1 Aust heavy and 2 "C" rations.

7 Platoon shook out at 1600hrs in drizzling rain, we followed the Centurion Tank track, crossing a couple of Nog tracks but they had nothing on them as they weren't being used. After 1000 yard's we "cut track" and harboured on the edge of the Tank track, we are all soaking wet.



TRAVELLING ABOUT:

TONY SAMUEL: After co-ordinating the Blaze Aid* camp at Inverell for 5 months I'm now co-ordinating the Blaze Aid camp here at Ebor following the Bees Nest** bush fires. The camps been going for 6weeks now and will most likely run until around February next year. The size of the fire area is now in excess of

220,000 hectares and the perimeter if you were to drive around it is about 1800ks. I've only been home for 6 days since the 3rd of March - the longest time away from home since we were in Vietnam.

**Blaze Aid is a voluntary organisation where mostly retired people and Grey Nomads travel at their own expense to areas of bushfires and to farms needing help with maintenance and repairs. They rebuild fencing and carry out all sorts of manual tasks.*

*** Bees Nest – an area of northern NSW.*

Ed's Note: Thanks Tony, your service to the community is much appreciated!



CockatooRise War Veterans Retreat Inc NEWS LETTER

BOOKINGS essential ring Greg Tel 0409418332 e cockatooRise@wideband.net.au

SPECIAL NOTICE

Cockatoo Rise War Veterans Retreat Inc , will be **MOVING** to a new location early December , 2019 . The retreat will be operational by the end of December 2019 , to welcome our veteran community .

The retreat will be housed in a 156 year old blue stone hotel , which wont be in use as a hotel anymore , just a retreat . The facilities to house and accomodate veterans & their partners will be signifcantly better , offering in house rooms for those who do not have a caravan . The retreat museum will also have more room to display the wonderful collection of memorabilia collected over the years .

The **NEW** location is 26 High Street , Macarthur Victoria, in The western District , between Port Fairy & Hamilton .

I look forward to meeting new veteran friends and welcoming back those who have stayed , or visited at Sarsfield in the past .

New retreat photo



FROM GREG (Hickory) DICK: If you get attacked by a bunch of clowns,
Always go for the juggler.



Dear former C Company comrades-in-arms,

It is now 50 years, yes 50 years, since our Christmas together at Nui Dat.

With the passing of years, we have aged in our different ways, some not so kindly, some more fortunate than others.

Whatever your current lot in life, whatever your state of health, be it physical or mental, you can rest assured that your mates from C Company 5RAR are always thinking of you.

We are one.

My wife, Beth and I wish you all and your families a very happy Christmas and as healthy a 2020 as is possible in your circumstances.

Warm regards to all,

Dave Wilkins

From your Editor: We have now achieved 156 editions of Half Circle. This could not have happened without the contributions of members – particularly David Wilkins, Ian Leis, Dennis Nevins, of course your articles. We have had several of our members tell their story – these articles have been very well received by all. If you want to contribute and help to keep Half Circle going, please contribute. Editing will be done for you. In the meantime, Roslyn and I would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas, and a healthy New Year. Don

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – donharrod@bigpond.com, 0418 423 313, with help from behind-the-scenes assistance from John Hunter, Digger Nevins, Greg Dick, Bill Titley, Dave Wilkins, John Hunter, Alan McNulty, Greg Carter, Gary Townsend (the Tiger Tales Editor), Ted Harrison (the 5RAR Association Webmaster), **supported by The RB Co, and powered by the Lambs Valley Wine Company, Hunter Valley, NSW.**