

Half Circle



Number 98 - February 2015

(If this is hard to read, try increasing the picture size to 150%!!)

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.

Gallipoli – 25th April 1915. The Centenary of the birth of the ANZAC tradition is only two months away. – this not only honours the bravest men the world has seen, but also sets the traditions of our country, and our servicemen. Our ancestors laid the foundations for our service to our country – we should seize the opportunity to commemorate their sacrifices.

I propose that each and every member of C Coy 5RAR – past and present – and our forefathers from the 2/5th Battalion AIF should meet the following challenge – ***everyone is invited to contribute three lines of tribute to our ANZACs. We will publish these in the April edition of Half Circle, and then seek for these tributes to be published more widely through our own resources, and outside.***

All you need to do is write no more than three lines of a tribute to our ANZACs in your own words, send it to your editor – donharrod@bigpond.com. If you have never put any words on paper, here is your opportunity to do so. I don't know if we'll set any new benchmarks in honouring our forefathers, nor does it matter. What does matter is that we pay an appropriate tribute to Australia's finest – and bravest. Over to you – I would like to receive a minimum of 150 messages – you only need to send one! Let's show Australia and the World that we care. Thanks, Don.



AT THE RAP: **Barrie Taylor** – ongoing oncology treatment
Vince Feenstra – hip replacement

Best wishes to all of our mates who may be currently unwell. Sometimes its great fun getting up in the morning – you get to see which bit will hurt today!

B52 – ARC LIGHT

Hugging the earth, we felt it shudder,
 Though it were hills away.
A rolling, awesome, awful thunder drowned our senses.
 From our burrows we could see nothing.
I thought I heard our mammoth friends high, droning off into the darkness,
 Then our senses, and the silence, and the jungle, returned.

In the morning we marched into an alien land,
 Huge red pockmarks, nothing living,
 Perhaps it was like the moon,
 We took small steps

David Mead

Battle Fear

Fear in battle/combat branches off in many directions. In most cases the main underlying reason is fear of death. It can be a multiple of other reasons that fear can develop from, and they are sights and sounds of the battlefield, and fear of the unknown.

Fear is not a bad emotion to carry into battle, as it can activate those other feelings within you, like hyper alertness and self- preservation. Fear can bind you to others which are why servicemen on their return home gather together. A special camaraderie is built on fear, and a bonding develops out of Battlefield Fear. This can also bind units together and builds strength and purpose that activates pride in unit.

Fear in Battle is different from other fears as your looking at death in the face. All soldiers can suffer from it. A common strait is that it can be carried for a lifetime in the form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It can change personalities, can make you aggressive and withdrawn, and can cause others to self- hurt. It can be insidious, where it can sit inside you for years, and come out later in life. Fear/stress can damage the immune system that can affect organs.

How do we deal with Battle Fear as soldiers, and there is only one, and that is good training. To train the soldier for a Battle Field fight, all avenues must be covered to give him the skill and confidence in oneself to go forward in Battle. This can come from bayonet fighting, to unarmed combat, and toughening him physically and hardening the mind from stressful training. An area overlooked is voice strengthening. Five minutes of shouting in Battle does you in calling on each other. To also create fear in the enemy in an assault on his position, like screaming and yelling. Voice plays a big part in control on the Battlefield.

Believing in oneself that you are up to the task ahead in closing with the enemy, gives you strength and confidence that hides your fears. Good leadership is paramount in preparing for Battle. Coming to grips with the enemy is a personal thing, where you must kill him. It is you and he, there is no controlling power, you are it, and you make the decisions once you have closed with him. You are on your own for maybe a short time.

Believing in self masks Battlefield fear, and can come out later after Battle, in the form of trembling crying, losing your bowels and vomiting.

I know I've been through it and have carried some of the above traits to this day.

Taffy Cheeseman



TRAVELLING ABOUT: Pat and Ben Oram made it to Port Macquarie to help Eric Hamlin celebrate his 70th birthday. Pam Hamlin reports that a good time was had by all.

IMPORTANT!! Have you changed your address in recent times and not told us about it? As Claude Ducker plans our Canberra reunion – only 13 months away – it is most important that we know how to contact you. Also, the 5RAR Association needs to know your current whereabouts. If you have moved, please contact your editor donharrod@bigpond.com so that your details may be passed on for you. Your current email address may not always be sufficient!

REMEMBER? **OUR NUI DAT BASE CAMP, VIETNAM 1969:**

- * The correct name of the C Coy lines, as part of the 5RAR section of the Nui Dat 1st Australian Task Force base, was Ap An Phu.
- * Goffers (soft drinks) – 15cents per can.
- * Beer (Reschs, VB, Tooheys Flag and Courage 15 cents per can. Any man who could drink Courage deserved an extra gong. It was almost as bad as Swan Lager, which just *did not travel* to the tropics!
- * Getters – your thongs which you wore to the shower.
- * The shower – a canvas bucket with a shower rose underneath. You turned the rose, got wet, turned it off, lathered yourself with soap, then

turned the rose again to release the water for a rinse. Sometimes you could even get luke-warm water for a special treat. Water was warmed by lighting a petrol fire in a sandpit underneath a 44 gallon drum, with the water being bucketed out of it into the shower bucket.

- * The toilets – a rough shed with a long plank with four holes cut into it – no privacy divisions, just a deep pit dug underneath to capture human waste.
- * Pissaphones – holes in the ground with a partly submerged 44 gallon drum, covered in fly wire. These were used as urinals – they stunk, and if a poor digger ever fell into one, it was a long time before he was ever re-admitted to his tent.
- * Our mail – we had free letter postage to/from Australia (when the posties weren't on strike). The highlight of any digger's day was when he got a letter from home. Mail was probably the most morale lifting item that was available, even though most letters were a week or so old when received. Mail was always sent to the field on re-supply days, and mail from the field was immediately sent through the postal service in the battalion home to diggers' loved ones.
- The tents – leaky canvas four-man tents, surrounded by waist-high sandbags, and duckboards for flooring. Each digger (and officer) had a bed, mattress, mosquito net, personal trunk, chair, and if lucky, an ammo box to use as a locker. There was a central single-bulb light. No power points, no other facilities. Stinking heat, humidity, no brewing facilities, no air conditioning, no telephones, no electronics, no TV, no computers or faxes, etc. The water supply was a 20L jerry can per tent, for drinking, shaving and washing purposes. ***Ed's note – It's a bit of a joke to hear some politicians speak of how inhumane tent accommodation is for illegal arrivals in our country, when they have never mentioned the conditions we endured for thirteen months when we served in Vietnam in 1969/70. The conditions mentioned in this article were in our base camp. The conditions suffered by our field soldiers defy description.***



[In Sydney and want to have a round of golf?](#) Then head for the Georges River Golf Course, Henry Lawson Drive Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish and his team will make you most welcome. Geoff is a Vietnam vet (RAA), and is a great supporter of this newsletter. Phone (02) 9724 1615.

Knowledge is knowing a Tomato is a fruit.

Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad.



Designated Driver

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – 0418 423 313, (02) 6842 4913, donharrod@bigpond.com, with help from David Mead, Taffy Cheeseman, and memories.

PLEASE – send your tribute to the ANZACs as soon as possible. See the article on page 1 above.

PLEASE – start polishing your boots for our C Coy reunion, to be held in Canberra 15/17 March 2016. It's not that far away!