

Half Circle



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(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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, AND MAY 2011 BE KIND TO EVERYONE.

*****NEW*******DAVE'S DIARY*******NEW*****

David Wilkins has kindly offered to regularly contribute to Half Circle, and here is the first of his articles. Thanks Dave:

Dave's Diary

Gentlemen of Charlie Company, as Pirate has made more requests for contributions to keep Half Circle going, I shall endeavour to provide extracts from my notebooks kept in South Vietnam during 1969-70. I shall begin from the time I joined C Coy on 29 October 1969 as Coy 2ic to Claude Ducker.

I hope to provide an extract for each Half Circle throughout 2011.

I had come to C Coy via B Coy where, in September and October, I was temporarily the Coy 2ic and acting OC for a while including during Operation Kingston. Before that I had been the battalion Adjutant for all of 1968 in Australia and then in Vietnam until the end of August 1969 when Bill Titley took over from me. As you will recall Bill had been Charlie Coy 2ic in Australia in 1968 and in Vietnam in 1969 until that change.

My notebook entries are in *italics* whilst additional explanatory or descriptive commentary is in plain text:

1 Nov 1969

Operation Kings Cross, in AO Grace, is being conducted in the Hat Dich area to the east of Route 15. This time of the year the VC normally concentrate in this area to obtain rice from the harvests near the Route 15 villages, particularly Thai Thien, Ap Tham Thien and Ap Tham Phuoc in Bien Hoa Province (up Route 15 between 8 and 14 kms north-west of Nui Thi Vai).

Operation Kings Cross was planned following receipt of intelligence reports that the enemy (NVA and VC) was planning a large scale offensive against the villages along Route 15, adjacent to the Hat Dich Secret Zone, the long-time Viet Cong haven and stronghold. The NVA in the Hat Dich area were well-

trained, well-armed, tenacious and operated in platoon, company, battalion and even regimental-sized units. A common enemy operational procedure was, after moving into a province, to set up well-sited and heavily-fortified bunker complexes hidden deep in the jungle, with the intention of conducting large-scale attacks on the South Vietnamese military posts and bases located near the hamlets and villages.

A, B, and C Companies were deployed to their respective areas of responsibility in the AO by APCs while D Coy was flown in by chopper. Further east, a Fire Support Patrol Base (named "Cape") was established. Close liaison was maintained with Vietnamese Regional Force units that were to operate in conjunction with 5 RAR.

By midday on this first day each of A, B and D Coys had been in contact against main force enemy. 6 Pl seem to have got themselves into something really hot, with the enemy in a well-defended bunker system, armed with AKs, RPGs and machine guns.

At the time of 6 Platoon's contact, we, C Coy, were mounted in APCs moving along Route 15, and were immediately given the task by the CO of putting in a block to the north of 6 Platoon. Their contact had occurred about a mile from Route 15 and so we were able to get a great view of the subsequent air strikes and gunships strafing the enemy position. 750-pound bombs, napalm, mini guns and 20 mm rockets were used before B Coy put in their ground attack.

No enemy came towards our blocking position that day. That would occur later.

2 Nov 1969 (to be continued)

IAN LEIS CONTINUES HIS MEMBER PROFILES:
217697 LCPL BARRY MORGAN

When I arrived at 5RAR/Holsworthy I was met by LCPL Barry Morgan and CPL John Everett. They were in charge of 5 section 8 Platoon which became home. Barry was a well presented, quiet, soft spoken NCO - not like the ones encountered at Ingleburn and Kapooka. Barry had a nick name 'Bill' that he bought into the army from being a 'Bank Johnny' in civvie street. He was also known as "Morg" by the end of his tour in SVN.

He was a regular soldier having signed on for three years. He completed Kapooka and Ingleburn. His first course (SIGs) at Holsworthy was to see him top the class. He was promoted to LCPL within 8 months of joining the army. He was very involved in the training and preparation for SVN of the new members of Charlie Company being assisted by CPL Bill Evans, CPL Bob Marshall and LCPL Allen Reeks.

Barry put a lot of effort into our training. I for one owe him a few apologies or maybe a few beers for the tolerance he showed to myself and many others during this time. He went to SVN with the advance party on very short notice as he was called upon to replace CPL John Everett who withdrew a few days before he was due to leave. Barry was now section commander of 5 section. LCPL Ted Suttor became 2IC.

Upon our arrival in Nui Dat Barry was once again very helpful in organising and settling us into our "5 star" accommodation and passing on information gained from being in the advance party. He remained in this job until being placed in CHQ Intelligence section.

As many remember I was the barber in 8 Platoon, having a father-in-law a barber who gave me an old set of 240v clippers (these clippers were a bit slow on the 120v available in Nui Dat). he also gave me a quick apprenticeship on how to use these clippers - "I knew how to turn them on". Well most diggers were happy with a No 1 all over and trim the neck - Barry

Morgan however was always after a style cut. He must have been trying to impress someone/somewhere.

In December 69, Barry was wounded and was very lucky to survive. His recovery was long and hard, fighting infections and follow up surgery for an extended period. It was whilst in hospital in Australia receiving treatment his three year engagement ran out. He was ready to get out of the military. However the re-engagement officer who visited in hospital persuaded Barry the military was the best option as ongoing medical treatment would be required - also the pay he was receiving would continue in the military.

He agreed with this and as we know 32 years went by and then Lieutenant Colonel Barry Morgan left the military. Since then he has continued with approx 11 years service to the army reserves.

There would certainly be many others who could write much more regarding this man - Barry certainly has my admiration and respect for his tremendous career and his determination to succeed. He has given freely his time to our Battalion Association and other organisations above and beyond the normal.

He married Kathleen (Kathy) in 1971, they had three daughters who have given them three grandchildren. All their family live in America and all get together as often as possible. His life is not without some ongoing health problems from his wounds received in SVN, also having had a heart scare, plus the normal problems of ageing. At present he is looking to the future on a positive note. He hopes to be able to relax a little more (less committees) maybe travel and of course see his family. His military friends being a special part of that second family we all have.

Barry Morgan you are a gentleman, a huge credit to your country and the military that you have virtually given your life to.

I thank you for the time and assistance you personally gave to me during my time with Charlie Company 5RAR.



In Sydney and want to hit the little white ball? 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.

AT THE RAP:

Barry Morgan, Barry Williams, Ian Cooper and Yogi Earl are all facing very serious health challenges, and **Dennis and Dianne Manhood** have not had an easy time either.. **Euston (Swanny) Swan** has been issued with new knees (M60-itis). Col Summerfield asks whether this was even necessary, as Swanny was never that tall anyway! We all take this opportunity to convey every good wish to these mates of ours.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod, donharrod@bigpond.com , (02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with thanks to Dave Wilkins, Ian Leis and Colin Summerfield.