

Half Circle



Number 85 - January 2014

(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.



AT THE RAP:

Wally Magalas - oncology treatment

Jack Bradd - currently in Maryborough Hospital, Qld

FROM ROGER LAMBERT - a response to Dave's Diary, Half Circle number 84:

Dave's description of the sea voyage home is spot on. It's funny – I never took any pictures on the way home and for the life of me, I have no idea why ...

Dace's article jogged the old memory banks though and the following came to mind:

The trip home from Vung Tau was through the Sunda Strait via Fremantle, Twofold Bay and on to Sydney.

Both Sydney and Yarra hove to over the wrecks of HMAS Perth and the USS Houston and wreaths were laid on the water in honour of the many Allied sailors who lost their lives in the Battle of Sunda Strait in February 1942. As I recall, the sea was like a millpond almost as if in reverence to the occasion ...

The layover in Twofold Bay was to enable the RAN to paint the hull of the fast troop carrier before docking in Sydney (starboard side only). The layover also enabled a lot of contraband to be ditched over the side of HMAS Sydney (HM Customs had boarded us in Fremantle for the trip to Sydney). One will probably never know the actual tally but I'm guessing that there is/was a veritable arms cache, or what's left of it, on the bottom of the Bay.

As for the actual voyage, I agree with Dave that the trip home was an invaluable time of relaxation and unwinding after the intensity of operations. I also agree and have said for years that those who flew home, especially those at the end of their National Service

commitment, were treated shamefully by the powers that be ... one day they were subject to the vagaries of combat operations and virtually the next they were back in civvy street with little or no chance to adjust.

I recall that I did one Duty Officer on the way home where we accompanied one of the ship's officers on a tour of the carrier checking the mess decks and the troop deck. I could never replicate the manner in which they descended ship's ladders without their feet touching the steps!

Readers would note from Dave's image that Sydney's forward elevator is down; the aft elevator would also have been down. The Ferry was not air conditioned so having the elevators down was the only effective way of getting fresh air down to the troop deck. Not sure who the red-headed bloke is jogging near the elevator but from his Bombay bloomers, I'm guessing he was Navy – we'd done enough walking and running to last a life-time at that stage!

As for being transferred between the carrier and the destroyer escort (HMAS Yarra) in the jack stay (flying fox). Not this little black duck.



How young were we? Here is a photo of Allan (Bluey) Austin of 8PL, with his "adapted" SLR. Bluey was nineteen years old when this picture was taken in Vietnam.



Bluey Austin writes: I have had my fair share of medical problems including three hip replacements, a knee replacement and re-attaching my bicep back to the bone. In spite of these things, I decided to get up and get moving and joined the Australian Bream fishing tournament. This has taken me all over Australia, and in doing this I have been able to contact Kim Locke (WA) and the late Tex Cunningham, Sandy McKinnon, Bob Byrnes (NSW), Bill Titley, Barry Baker, Ben Oram, Jack Bradd Qld), just to name a few. In my fishing exploits, I managed to finish 23rd out of 40 in the National Championships. My boat, **TIGER 5** is pictured. I am as proud of this as I was dropping a line. I have received a lot of looks and very favourable comments when on the road with **TIGER 5**. Bluey.

DAVE'S DIARY: Home at Last

En route from Vietnam to Sydney we made a four-hour stopover at Fremantle on 5th March not only to disembark the Sandgroppers but also to make a quick visit to the SAS barracks at Swanbourne. We had a look at their training facilities (including the “killing house” where hostages are rescued from their captors), had a BBQ lunch and then back on the boat for Sydney.



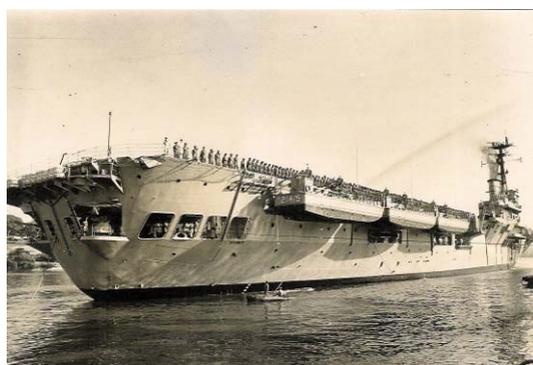
Visit to the SAS Swanbourne Barracks on 5 March 1970- Don Teichelman & Rod Zunneberg

We steamed through Sydney Heads on 10 March 1970.



We're home- entering Sydney Heads 10 March 1970

All ranks, dressed to the nines in starched greens, campaign ribbons, slouch hats and gold lanyards on the left shoulder, stood shoulder to shoulder, lining the top deck as we proceeded through Sydney Heads until docking at Woolloomooloo. It was wonderful to be met by such an excited and emotional crowd of family and friends.



Lining the decks of the Vung Tau Ferry at Woolloomooloo.

(To be continued)

ON THE SICK LIST:

Jack Bradd has been doing it pretty tough lately, and is currently in hospital in Maryborough, Qld. However, he has not been forgotten, and Bill Titley, Barry Baker, and Digger Nevins' daughter Sarah and Sam are keeping a good eye on him. Digger recently undertook a ten-hour return car trip to spend just half an hour with his old mate. We are pleased to report that Jack is slightly better as this photograph of him with Sam shows:



Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod, 0418 423 313, (02) 6842 4913, donharrod@bigpond.com, with help from Bluey Austin, Roger Lambert, Dave Wilkins, Sarah Nevins, and that awful joke book.

Wishing a happy and healthy New Year to all.