

# Half Circle



Number 157 - January 2020

This informal publication is for the members of C Coy 5 RAR (2<sup>nd</sup> 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, Terry Major. We send our best wishes to our mates who are not as well as they would like to be.

John (Buddah) Martini sent the following message: "I have just had a email from Alex Koppen (known as Hippie to all) wife Fran who advises the Hippie has just been moved into care after spending the last 6 months in hospital after a mental breakdown. Hippie arrived in Vietnam with the battalion at the beginning of the tour and was with Ian Hosie when he led tracker platoon, then eventually came over to 7 Platoon after Ian became the platoon commander. He was a well-known and well-liked digger and provided plenty of laughs".

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**FROM DAVID WILKINS:** FYI: to obtain the DVA lapel pin etc. go to:

<https://recognition.dva.gov.au/how-veterans-can-apply-information-page>

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**FROM DENNIS (DIGGER) NEVINS:** My diary entries for 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> December 1969:

24th Dec 69.

No movement into to us last night, at 1000hrs we packed up and pushed out, we moved down the creek on the same track we came in on, after a 100 yards Doc Halliday halted us to have a shave, after which we pushed out towards Route 15 going around the suspected Minefield and over the feature we crossed on the 22nd Dec. About 1000 yards from Route 15 we were met by 3 APCs, they already had CHQ and Mortar Section on them so we crammed ourselves in, how I don't know but it was only a short trip.

The APCs took us to Route 15 where CHQ and 7 Platoon dismounted and harboured, the APCs and Mortar Crews returned to the Dat. We on the ground brewed up and waited for trucks, they arrived and they took us back to the Dat. Normal routine was then carried out, part of that was packing 3 days rations.

We received parcels from the Australian Forces Fund, they had some good gear in them.

There was a Barbeque tea and I had 2 cans of beer which made me dizzy.

In the afternoon a spotter plane flew over playing Christmas Carols.

\* I'm pleased to say, these days I can drink 2 cans of beer without getting dizzy.

25th Dec 69.

It's Christmas Day, first up LT Hosie and Sgt Doc Halliday served us Coffee Royal in bed and wished us Merry Christmas, it was quite a laugh.

Last night the Task Force flipped its lid as there were Flares and Smoke Grenades going off everywhere. Today most us saw the Christmas show which was beaut, a really good show. Lunch was with Company and it was good as well, the Officers and Sergeants served the Diggers, there were some members of the ABC Band with us. The lunch went over well and the blokes enjoyed it.

In the afternoon I flaked out and when I awoke "Stick " had come up from A Company, he was pretty pissed, we had a good yarn about his Pen Pal Meryl and my Pen Pal Liz.

I guess Christmas 69 was as good as a bloke could make it and it was.

26th Dec 69.

This morning Sgt "Wog" Burns gave a Signals lesson for our Group 9 course and in the afternoon, we had lesson from Corporal Miles from C Company on the same subject, we then were given an exam under the control of "Goldie" from Signals, we all passed.

Before the Signals lecture the Acting Adjutant had a talk to us about Married Quarters and the OC gave us a run down on the 2-day Operation. We have a new fella in our Section, he came from the Reinforcement Unit and has been with us a few days, his name is Mick Fitzgerald, he has the nick name of "Bluey" and was a Boundary Rider in the Territory.

I'm on piquet tonight on the 8 Platoon Gun, there is a rumour that we start the next Operation with a Cordon and Search.

\* Bluey Fitzgerald turned out a good hand, he loved chewing Tobacco.



The first of these pictures shows Geoff Pearson having a smoke with our late mate Mick (Dobbsy) Dobbs, and the second shows Pearson's ability to be able to take over from the RSM, should the need have arisen.

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**SOME OF THE SLANG WE USED IN VIETNAM:**

Beaucoup: From the French, meaning "many". Among the Vietnamese it also means big, much, etc.

Boonies: Short for "boondocks", meaning the woods, backwoods, jungle.

Charley: VC (from the radio terminology "Victor Charlie"). Never referred to as "Charles" as the Saigon-based newspaper reporters would have you believe.

Chieu Hoi: The Vietnamese "open arms" program to encourage VC to defect.

Coka: Vietnamese pronunciation for "Coke".

Close enough for government work: A sloppy job but maybe no one will notice.

Di-Di: (Pronounced "dee-dee"). Vietnamese for "scram".

Dien-Cai-Dao: (Pronounced "dinky-dow"). Vietnamese for "crazy". They say all Americans are a little dinky-dow and all Australians are beaucoup dinky-dow.

Drop: (verb): To be made to do push-ups. (From jump school. Such as "I had to drop every time the sergeant looked my way.")

Dust-off: The medevac helicopter system.

Extend: To extend is to voluntarily remain in Vietnam after the completion of a one-year tour of duty.

Fini: From the French, meaning “finished”. Used by the Vietnamese, such as in “GI, when you fini Vietnam?”

Flat: Completely. Such as “we are flat out of ammo”.

Grows Old: Becomes tiresome.

Hairy: Very dangerous.

Hard core: A tough individual, such as a particularly irreconcilable VC.

Hat roi: Vietnamese for “fini” but stronger. If you’re “hat roi”, you’re really “fini”.

Hooch: Any native hut. This word dates from the Korean war.

Incoming: The verbal announcement indicating that enemy mortar rounds are landing.

Incountry: In Vietnam.

LBJ: Long Binh Jail, the military stockade in Vietnam (or Lyndon Baines Johnson, American president after JFK).

Lima Lima: Landline. Slang for telephone.

Lima Charlie: Loud and Clear.

MACV: (Pronounced “mack-vee”.) Military Advisory Command, Vietnam. In Saigon, this is a lavish headquarters; in the field, small, very poorly supported U.S. advisory teams.

MPC: Military Pay Certificate.

Noojin: Any Vietnamese. From the name “Nguyen”, which is the surname for 50% of the Vietnamese.

Number one: Vietnamese expression for “good”.

Number ten: Vietnamese expression for “bad”.

Number ten thousand: American expression for Vietnam.

P’s: Piastres, the Vietnamese money, worth a little less than a cent.

Rog: (Pronounced “rahj”). Short for “Roger”, radio terminology for “I understand”. Generally used as an affirmative, such as “That’s a rog.” or “Roger on that.”

Same-same: Vietnamese slang for “same”. (Don’t ask why.)

Scarf up: To collect, or to scrounge.

Scarf: Eat or eat quickly

Ship Home Quartermaster Style: Go home in a coffin.

Short: To be short is to have only a month or two left of the one-year tour of duty in Vietnam.

Smarts: (verb) Pains.

Smokey: Flare ship.

Spooky: C-47 gunship armed with mini-guns.

That’s affirm: That’s right (from “affirmative”, radio expression for “yes”).

Ti-ti: (Pronounced “tee-tee”). Vietnamese slang for “little”.

Upcountry: Any place out of the Saigon-Long Binh-Bien Hoa area, where newspaper reporters don’t go.

Victor Charlie: Radio terminology for VC.

Victor November: Radio terminology for Vietnamese.

VR: A Visual Reconnaissance by air from a light plane.

Wait one: Wait a minute.

Zap: To kill.

***Ed’s note: there were many connotations and combinations of the slang used – the above example is only one of them!***

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**FROM GARY TOWNSEND, TIGER TALES EDITOR AND 5RAR ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP OFFICER:**

I have just spoken to Michelle Smith, 'Bluey' Maltby's daughter. Her telephone is 0457 149 496 and email is [zulugueen007@hotmail.com](mailto:zulugueen007@hotmail.com)

Michelle said that she will be bringing some photos to the Reunion next year as the family do not know who they are and thought that someone may appreciate them.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

Dogs can't operate MRI Scanners, but Catscan.

I'm terrified of lifts in buildings, I'm taking steps to avoid them.

Rushing soft drink cans is soda pressing.

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