

# Half Circle



Number 79 - July 2013

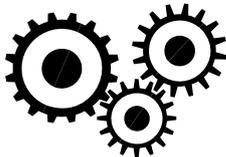
**(If this is hard to read, try increasing the picture size to 150%!!)**

This informal publication is for the members of C Coy 5 RAR (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:**

Bob (Tex) Cunningham - oncology treatment (going well)  
Colin Summerfield - medical  
Max Postle - knee - almost ready to resume dancing!



**"COGS IN THE WHEEL"** I don't know if we can continue with this topic in Half Circle, because nobody seems to want to come forward with their personal thoughts and descriptions of what role they played in our Vietnam service. Please contact me, volunteer, and prove me wrong! Ed.

It seems as though our "Half Circle" network is doing the job. A couple of weeks ago, two old mates from Colin Summerfield's home town of Forbes decided to try and contact him after 40 years. They simply Googled "Colin Summerfield", and his name came up as he was mentioned in Half Circle. They contacted your editor who was able to direct them to Colin. A reunion visit is now being planned.

If anyone has information on any member who has an email address, and is not on our mailing list, please let your editor know. Thanks, Don

A mate of mine has been charged with malicious wounding after attacking another bloke with a sheet of sandpaper. He reckons he only wanted to rough him up a bit.

BLUE MOUNTAINS VIETNAM  
VETERANS  
& ASSOCIATED FORCES INC.

cordially invites you to attend our

*Annual Parade & Memorial Service*

Sunday 11th August, 2013

This date has been allocated to enable Ex Service Organisations to conduct their own services on the actual Vietnam Veterans Day, Sunday 18th August.

The parade will be assembling at 11:00am, Macquarie Rd, Springwood. The service will be followed by a social function at the Royal Hotel, Springwood to which your members are invited to join us.

This year our Guest of Honour is Lt Col Gary McKay MC. Gary was a National Service officer who was awarded the MC serving with 4RAR in Vietnam, stayed on in the Army attaining the rank of Lt Col & became the CO of 8th/9th RAR.

Gary is a worthy Guest of Honour who has written several books about his experiences including "In Good Company" & "Delta Four: Australian Riflemen in Vietnam".

Please advise our Association of your intention to attend by **1st July** & whether you intend to lay a floral tribute or book to be presented to a local school.



John Fenton JP,  
Honorary Secretary

Phone:

02 47518528

Email:

secretary@bmvets.com.au

As most would know, our CSM Jack Lake is the president of the above Association. Jack has requested that if anyone can make it to this commemoration at Springwood (in the lower Blue Mountains NSW), they would be most welcome. Your editor has previously attended, and can assure you that it is one of the largest and most moving of any memorial services that recognises our involvement in the Vietnam War.

## DAVE'S DIARY:

Continued from the previous edition of Half Circle.

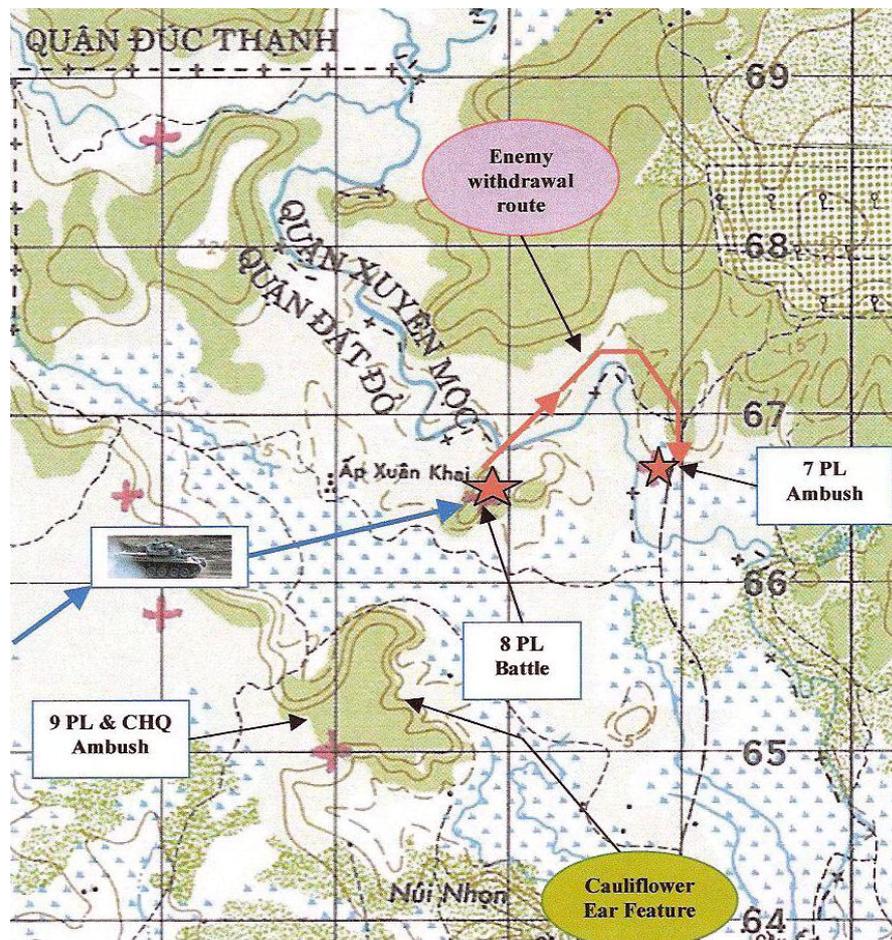
My diary entries are in *italics* whilst additional data from Battalion and Task Force logs, as well as explanatory or descriptive commentary, are in plain text:

11 Feb 1970 (continued)

8 Platoon had been embroiled in a heavy contact and with the support of tanks from 4 Troop at the Horseshoe had completed its assault into an enemy platoon bunker complex.

*Once the enemy had withdrawn and our wounded were dusted off, I had hopes that my depth ambushes set by 7 and 9 Platoons would get some joy, but I began to lose hope by 1900 hours.*

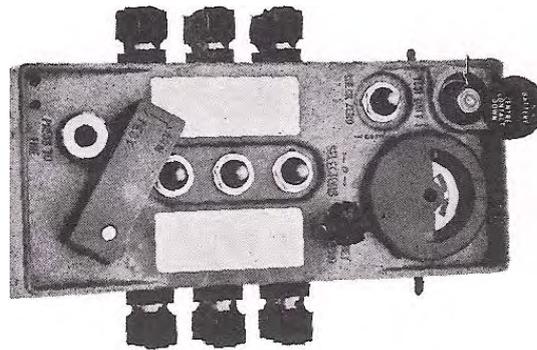
As Digger Nevins pointed out in last month's Half Circle, 7 Platoon felt the VC might withdraw their way along the small track they were ambushing to the east. The original plan had been that should any of the three C Coy groups strike the enemy, the other two would be in positions to have the withdrawing enemy come their way (see map). And so 7 Platoon and 9 Platoon (with CHQ) were silently waiting. In this case the enemy appeared to have split up and withdrawn to the north and east.



Machine gunner, Digger, continues the saga from his ambush position:

"I remember the light shuffle of leaves; they were very quiet but had no idea we were waiting. There were 4 diggers in control- Lt Hosie, Jack Bradd, myself and Andy MacDougal. The nogs were right in front of the 4 of us."

*Then at 1920 hours, just on last light, an enormous explosion came from 7 Platoon's ambush area, followed by sustained machine gun fire. Hosie's "magic box" was in use. This was his device to detonate 12 claymore mines simultaneously.*



Hosie's "Magic Box"

Seven or more enemy had approached from the north as indicated on the map, spread out over 100 metres. *The result was 6 enemy KIA plus blood trails* indicating wounded but escaped. *Plus weapons. It was an excellent result all round!* Captured were 3 AK47s, 5 packs and a quantity of medical equipment. Unfortunately platoon commander, Lt Ian Hosie, was wounded during the assault into the killing zone after the ambush had been sprung.

The After Action Reports detailed amongst other things, the ammunition expended. During its battle 8 Platoon used about 2,500 rounds of MG link, 800 M16 rounds, 500 SLR rounds and multiple M79 and M26 grenades. In the follow-up action, 7 Platoon initiated its ambush with the bank of 12 Claymores, and then expended 700 rounds of MG link, 100 M16 and 300 SLR rounds, 40 HE grenades, an M72 rocket and 5 white phosphorous grenades (THAT certainly lightened their carrying load).

12 Feb 70

*The following day 9 Platoon with CHQ pushed towards 8 Platoon and 4 Troop (tanks) and on the way through the northern part of the "cauliflower ear" terrain cleared two further bunker systems using clearing fire and movement. As a result we surprised a group of enemy there and flushed them out: 1 enemy KIA. There were 12 bunkers (with 18" to 3' overhead protection), 6 huts and a cookhouse. We captured a quantity of fragmentation grenades and some documents. Two hours later and 200 metres further north east 9 Platoon and CHQ struck the second system of 7 bunkers with 2 feet overhead protection. The system had been used within the last 24 hours. More enemy documents were recovered.*

*From documents captured in these contacts, it appeared that D440 Battalion had moved into the area and were being supported by 84 Rear Services. Earlier intelligence reports indicated that D440 was outside its normal operational area, which could indicate that it and D445 (contacted by D Coy in the Xuan Son area about 12 clicks to our north west) were planning a coordinated offensive against a centre of population such as Binh Ba or Hoa Long, or both. D Coy had also contacted a medical section of D445. Now it was confirmed that elements of D440 had joined up with D445 to prepare for operations that had been planned before Tet. The intelligence assessment was that it was also possible that ammo transportation was being conducted by C2/84 Rear Services Coy and that some distribution had occurred. Although enemy operations had been severely disrupted there was still some capability to carry out some offensive operations.*

*This is becoming far too hot for such a short time to go before RTA.*

(To be continued)

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## **THE HOA LONG DANCE**

How many C Company members, or for that matter Battalion members, recall the infamous "Hoa Long Dance"? And more importantly, how many fell for the ruse?

As many veterans would recall, Hoa Long was an actual Vietnamese village down the road from the Task Force base. But what about the dance?

I first became acquainted with the Hoa Long Dance on the Battalion Advance Party in 1969.

Our 1 RAR hosts took great relish in describing the dance which was reputedly held each Saturday night in Hoa Long. And the description of the dance was done with much conviction.

Now for those new in country, any diversion would be a welcome one especially if it involved a dance and women and especially being so recently used to the social scene at home in Australia. What else was a fit, young warrior chomping at the bit to do on a Saturday night in Phouc Tuy Province?

As I recall, the requirement was to get dressed in civvies and assemble on the main road leading into the Battalion area. At an appointed time, a bus would reputedly come along to pick up the assembled group, suitably attired in civvies, and take them into Hoa Long for the dance. The bus would then return to Hoa Long later that evening and bring the group back to Nui Dat at the conclusion of the dance.

Too good an opportunity to miss? Apparently so as I'm told that those with 'a few days and a wakey' took great delight in covertly watching this group of newbies, dressed in civvies, assemble at the appointed time and wait for the bus for Hoa Long - which of course, never came.

So let's be honest guys - how many fell for the ploy? And no, for the record, I wasn't one of them.

But - and there's always one of those - according to the attached sign, perhaps the dance was not a figment of someone's vivid imagination? Hmmmm ...

Then there was the "Dat Do Dogs" race meeting but of course that's a similar but other story ...

### Roger Lambert



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We hired a new house cleaner - a lady from Eastern Europe. We had to let her go, as it took her over eleven hours just to Hoover the floors. Apparently she was a Slovak.

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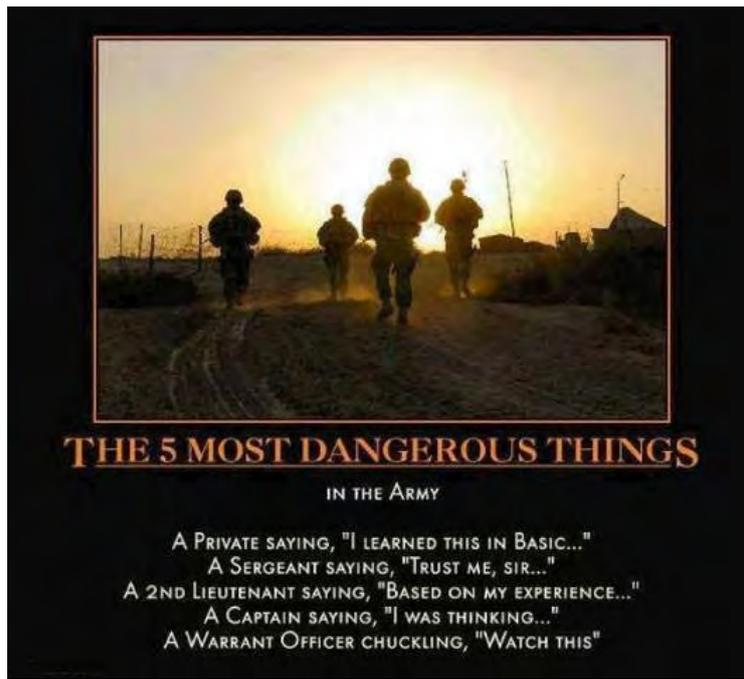
*In Sydney and want to hit the little white ball?* Then head for the Georges River Golf Course, Henry Lawson Drive Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish and his team will make you most welcome. Geoff is a Vietnam vet (RAA), and is a great supporter of this newsletter. Phone (02) 9724 1615.

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From  
Africa

?



From Andy MacDougal: My son sent me this. Some things just don't change!!

**IN THE NEXT EDITION OF HALF CIRCLE:**

1. Haven't got a clue - hopefully someone will contribute something.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - [donharrod@bigpond.com](mailto:donharrod@bigpond.com)  
(02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with help from David Wilkins, Jack Lake, Roger Lambert, Andy MacDougal, Don Teichelman and Bill Hartley.