

Half Circle



Number 139 - July 2018

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: Barrie Taylor, Peter Commerford, Barry Morgan, Neville Hayne. Our best wishes are extended to our mates.

FROM DENNIS (DIGGER) NEVINS: In 1991 I was posted at Canungra, and with Long Tan Day coming up in August I wrote to the Brisbane Courier Mail about my entry in my diary of 18Aug69, when I was a member of Tracker Platoon. I wasn't expecting it to be put in the letters section of the Courier but they did and awarded me the letter of the month along with a Westminster Biro and pen set inside a leather lined box with my initials in gold on the front. I didn't see much in the article but they must have so this is what I sent, remember I was in Tracker Platoon at the time:

“Left on a patrol east of FSB Polly, after 1000 yard's we stopped for a 10 minute smoke break, "Pumpa" went and had a leak near a tree and as the piss was hitting the leaves they started falling away thus exposing a tunnel. The tunnel had not been used for some time but was still in good order. We searched around the area and found old Panji pits and Communication trenches but they hadn't been maintained at all. Cpl "Butch" Baker went down one tunnel but it came to an end after 25 feet, he then went down another for 30 feet but came back out as the tunnel extended a lot further. We are getting Engineers onto it. Bravo Company made contact with 6 enemy but they withdrew so they called in Gunship's. Lt Ryan was wounded, have no further results, I think Lt Ryan is with 5 Platoon. On the 20th we escorted Engineers out and they found the 30 foot tunnel extended to 150 yards. They stopped at that point as they ran out of rope. They came across little rooms and other tunnels branching off it. On the 22nd we escorted 2 Engineers back to the tunnel and they blew it with explosives”.



FROM ROGER LAMBERT: "What is this piece of equipment and what was it used for in Vietnam?" Hint - it was painted Olive Drab rather than the bright Yellow illustrated. *Answer in the next issue.*



TRAVELLING ABOUT: Phil and Marion Greenhalgh are testing the new SUV with a trip to run it in. The trip will take them from Melbourne to far North Queensland and many points in between.

Reprinted from Half Circle number 65 – May 2012: One of our blokes (nameless of course) got hold of a two way radio. On our way to Vung Tau for a two day R&C break sometime in late 1969, we travelled through some road works, with traffic being monitored by our ever friendly MPs. This bloke caused utter chaos when he got onto their radio channel and did some traffic control of his own. We could never understand why the MPs didn't like us.

Reprinted from Half Circle number 27 – February 2009. From Terry Major: Fifty one years ago, Herman James, a bloke from the outback, was drafted into the Army. On his first day in basic training, the Army issued him with a comb. That afternoon, the Army barber shaved off all his hair. On his second day, the Army issued Herman with a toothbrush. That afternoon, the Army dentist yanked out seven of his teeth. On the third day, the Army issued Herman with a jock-strap. They have been looking for Herman for the past fifty one years.

Reprinted from Half Circle number 22 – September 2008 –
From Barry Baker - The Chieu Hoi Program

It was autumn in South Vietnam and I believe the unit was engaged in Operation Kingston. Morale was high in 7 Platoon; we had not been near Coy HQ for over a week and were having some contacts (minor skirmishes). The past three days we engaged in some type of contact with the nogs. This kept both Lt Hosie and my section commander Jack Bradd happy, as they both welcomed liaisons with the enemy.

Patrolling stealthily we heard some voices, definitely not Australian, they were high pitched and no one could understand what was being said. These voices were about 50-100 metres away; they were unaware of our presence. We immediately stopped, Lt Hosie moved up to Jack's position and the plan was hatched, however not to Jack's liking. Jack had ideas of a quick section attack supported by his ever reliable gunner Dennis "Digger" Nevins. Lt Hosie thought it would be a coup if the platoon could capture some. After some discussion Lt Hosie's plan was the one to be implemented. (I don't know why Jack disagreed, as he had often mused aloud, (during our discussions on international affairs in the boozers), of his plans to capture a couple of nogs. Jack believed that they were world class athletes, due to the way they run off when contacted, and thought that he could take advantage of their speed. He planned to smuggle a couple back to Australia, enter them in events such as the Stawell Gift and make a killing. (Maybe just wistful thinking)

Unfortunately Lt Hosie's plan did not include Jack or any part of his section, they were told to wait, whilst he took the rest of the platoon to do the deed. Jack was not to be denied, he set his section up in an ambush, maybe the nogs will not "Chieu Hoi" and run this way, then we can give them what for, reckons Jack. After about 5 minutes waiting in the ambush position and deadly silence, suddenly to our rear we heard a chorus of "Chieu Hoi, Chieu Hoi" in very loud voices. A slight pause, then the sound of (world class athletes) running, sadly not toward Jack's section.

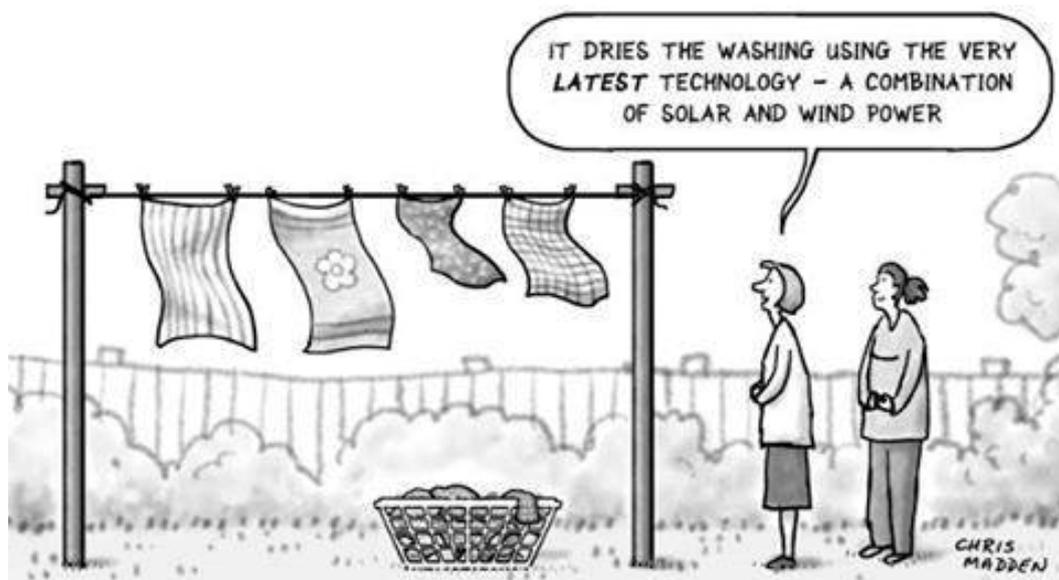
The platoon married up again, Jack had his "told you so" look on, patrolling then continued, all were hoping that we could have a proper contact soon, this would help the slight drop in morale. I personally believe it's a pity that we did not get a couple of Chieu Hoi's, we could have saved them for when Jack was due back in Australia, the majority of the platoon didn't mind a bet.

NEW CONTACT: As mentioned in Half Circle #137, Susan and Jack Lake recently travelled through Horsham, Vic, and contacted the family of the late **Jim McMillan**. Jim's sister, Di is now on our mailing list, and would love to hear from any 7PL or other C Coy diggers. Di's email is dkbolwell@gmail.com. Visits have previously been made by Ian and Glenys Leis, Sandy McKinnon, Andy MacDougal, Ken Leggett, Dave Bowman and Mike Browne.



Reprinted from Half Circle number 7 – September 2007: The “Buddha” pictured was found on operations, and choppered back to C Coy’s base. With the addition of a bush hat, a shirt, and a set of arms (courtesy of a crouching digger), it came to life, and spent the rest of our tour guarding one of the Company Headquarters tents. Note the wooden boxes on the sandbags – these held the toiletries of the tents’ residents – better than the bathroom cabinet back home.

The digger wasn’t feeling too flash, so he attended the RAP. The RMO gave him a thorough examination and said “I’ve checked everything and can’t find anything wrong. It must be the beer”. The digger replied “That’s OK Sir, I’ll come back when you’re sober”.



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