

Half Circle

Number 31 - June 2009

(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.

THE ANZAC DAY 2009 REPORT:

FROM NORTH QLD - IAN COOPER: Forrest Beach NQ has a small stone cenotaph located on the seafront. Service was held at 8 am and a good attendance of about 200 locals mainly schoolkids attending. The local headmaster was the MC, and recorded music for the Last Post followed by the minutes silence and Reveille. Morning tea was supplied by the local QCWA. Later on in the morning I travelled into the township of Ingham for the main service.....would have been over 1500 people attending. The Saluting party consisted of the Mayor, Navy Commander Kerry Rawshine and the RSL local branch president. A fairly long ceremony and a couple of the schoolkids fainted as the temperature was heading for the 30's.....turned out to be a really nice day. Retired to the local RSL and partook of a couple of ales then headed back to the beach. I don't think that there are too many ex 5 RAR blokes living in NQ.

FROM BRISBANE - Vince Feenstra: Brisbane Anzac day march was well attended by some 40 5RAR blokes. The weather was hot, about 30c. We marched behind the new banner and the parade was led by Bruce Schmidtchen. I also had the pleasure of catching up with Tex Nevins at Beaudesert recently. I had not seen Tex since 1970 and we had a great day after all these years.

FROM THE DARLING DOWNS, QLD - Russell (Kiwi) Hill: We had a good roll-out for the Dawn Service, and also the main parade here in Jandowae. It is very encouraging to see the crowds growing each year, and especially as so many of them are the younger generation.

FROM LAUNCESTON - Kevin Mulligan:



We had 12 5RAR members from both tours march under the 5RAR banner in Launceston. C Coy was represented by Mal Youd and me. The worst possible weather for three years was on the cards, but it turned out to be a perfect day. Mal's two grandsons, Braydon and Michael were the Banner Bearers. We then moved to a local hotel, accompanied by our wives. A good day was had by all. Mal is pictured with his back to the camera, and I am wearing my green beret.

FROM ADELAIDE - Ron (Fred) Dwyer: Members of 9 Platoon & their wives, as part of their reunion at Victor Harbour, attended the dawn service at that location. It was a brisk but dry morning, the service was well attended by the locals where the RSL president acknowledged the

platoon diggers were in town & assigned Bluey Schafer the task of laying the wreath for Vietnam Veterans. The Platoon then travelled by bus to Adelaide for the march, platoon members were, Bluey Schafer , Terry Major, Jock Phillips, Ross Bourke, Reg Smith, Ben Oram, Eric Hamlin, Max Postle, Phil Winney, Phil Greenhalgh, Don Teichelman, Geoff Storm, Dennis Manhood, Fred Dwyer, & visitor Eric Gray. Owen Schmidt was a casualty & unable to attend the march because of the rearguard action required at the Hotel the night before.

This motley group of diggers, marching all together for the first time, swelled the ranks of the Adelaide Tigers, all scrubbed up really well & put on a good showing of slick marching skills.

The weather threatened during the march but luckily kept away until we broke formation at the end, the group then ventured (walked) to the Old Lion Hotel where the Tigers were meeting (just down the road according to Bluey) there were a few xxxxxx diggers after the trek in the wind & rain, but as normal, all soldiered on and were happy to get the first ale in their hands.

The Bus picked the group up around 1330 hrs for the ride back to Victor, Hungry Jacks was a popular pit stop for a feed & toilet break, fatigue & the wives kept the drive to a comfortable level (maybe old age was catching up) arriving back at the Motel around 1600 hrs leaving enough time for a nanny nap before fronting up for the reunion dinner at the Victor Harbour Golf Club.

It was a long day & a good time was had by all.



Pictured from left: Terry Major, Fred Dwyer with tie flapping, Jock Phillips' grey hair behind, Blue Schafer and Ben Oram



FROM PERTH - Terry Bates: Jim Lowry and I started ANZAC Day at the Dawn Service at Blackboy Hill, where the 10th Light Horse trained and left from for WWI. Coffee and scones were provided. We then travelled to Perth for a Gunfire Breakfast in the Supreme Court Gardens, and met up with Peter Guyatt, Geoff Pearson and their wives. We then joined the parade, and the new banner (carried by Mike Nettleton and me) was a bit hit. 5RAR was represented by about 50 diggers. Dartsa's son Chris marched with us in memory of his Dad.

The above photo shows the banner with Terry Bates, Jim Lowry, Graham Hill, Wayne Herbert and Dave Stone.

From Fraser Island - Chris Jenkins: Anzac Day this year was at Waddy Point, Orchid Beach Fraser Island. The dawn service on the beach was just brilliant. The sun just started to break on Fraser as the strains of "The Last Post" echoed in the air. The service was attended by some 400

people who were catered for by the local sub-branch with food, ale and entertainment for the rest of the day. The set up and facilities provided in such a remote place is amazing. The food kept coming all day in order to soak up the 22 kegs of Mr XXXX's finest. At 10.23 am we were treated to an F111 which buzzed us twice', so low that if he lifted his visor you could see him smile. This event has occurred every year for the last 9 years. I went with four mates to Fraser this year and a photo is attached. We managed to spend 5 days in this bit of paradise, and never did get to use much of the bait. The sub-branch was founded by a bunch of 6 RAR boys all of whom were in the battle of Long Tan.



(Names in the photo are from left to right - John Heselwood (6RAR), Alan Thorp (9RAR), Chris Jenkins (5RAR), John Quincy (6RAR), Peter Snow (Ord.), Bruce Barker (RAE)



FROM MUDGEERABA QLD - Peter Knight: I didn't get to the march, but there was a great turnout, and the local RSL does a great job.

FROM MELBOURNE - Barrie Taylor: I had a memorable day, as it turned into a really strong family bonding day. Both my boys went to the dawn service in Melbourne, I returned to march with 5 RAR around 11-40 take off. The day started off overcast conditions with warnings of some rain. It didn't deter the crowd turning out 38,000 attending the dawn service, it just gets bigger and bigger our younger generation has embraced diggers of all ages and theatres of war. During the march the conditions warmed up and by the time we arrived at the shrine the sun was shining.



FROM SYDNEY: Fine and windy - our new banner nearly ended up in Auckland, complete with the bearers. A good roll-up and good to see faces such as Bob Hooper, Bill Hartley and Denny Cakoliris appearing. Regulars such as Dave Wilkins, Peter Commerford, Alan Riley and Eddie Moon helped to make up the numbers. The photo shows Eddie Moon, Dave Wilkins and Don Harrod at the NSW banner's first public airing.

FROM THE BLUE MOUNTAINS OF NSW - Jack Lake: We held three services - the Dawn Service, the main Morning Service, and the Sunset Service. The day was superb, with appropriate respect being paid to the fallen, the veterans, and those currently serving in all theatres.

From HERVEY BAY QLD - Bill Titley

Weather was puurrrrrfect! Temp range from 19 to 27. Fine, with no cloud. Nothing new in that for G.O.C.!

Both the Dawn and mid-morning Services were very well attended by both the veteran community and the good citizens of Hervey Bay and district.

The Tigers were very light on the ground, with Mick Sinclair (Sp Coy) the only one other than myself wearing the Tiger Tie. Jack Bradd was MIA and, though I had seen him in the few weeks prior to ANZAC Day, Mick told me he wasn't too well. Since starting this report, I have seen Jack and he is soldiering in his typical fashion, without a drop of self pity - that's the digger he is!

As a member of the Hervey Bay Legacy Group, I was fairly committed to tasks aimed at earning us some funds - erecting and striking tentage for the main ceremony (how that has changed over the years) - it took six blokes about five minutes to unpack and erect a tent and the same to strike and re-pack it. Now that IS progress!!

We manned the Two-up and Crown and Anchor, as well as "rattling the can" and later selling raffle tickets at a sunset concert starring Darryl Braithwaite and Adam Brand.

Maybe for next year we should import a few of the Sydneysiders for a taste of our great weather and hospitality!

FOUND..... **Peter (Blue) McHugh.** Jack Lake has tracked down Peter, who is resident in the lower Blue Mountains (NSW). Peter was a member of 7PI, and suffered very serious injuries in the mine incident in July 1969. Glad to have you back on board Blue!

ALSO FOUND..... **Greg (Hickory) Dick.** Jack also tracked Greg down, to an olive grove in Laura, SA. Good to make contact again Hickory. Have a look at www.hickorysrn.com

BARRIE TAYLOR ALSO SAID..... My father (88) was a commando in WW 2 known as the Double Diamond -Purple Devils based in New Guinea working behind the lines. He normally marches but due to crook feet (He reckons he walked over the own Stanley ranges and back 3 times) he missed this year, but in true mateship tradition he booked all our family (11 of us) into his reunion lunch with his mates rounding out to 150 people, 3 course meal plenty of booze, great day very rewarding for my 2 sons as they compared the difference in logistic support of the 2 wars (walking as compared to a ride in a Huey).

I'm a lucky bastard as I was one of the 4 who walked out of the tragic mine field event on July 4. From that experience and many others I looked for the positives in life and used humour to heal the wounds of that event.

As you know the Aussie soldier finds humour even through disaster. Forty years has passed, names of many survivors cannot be remembered but the nick names & stories remain vivid.

I recall one of the few days we were back in the Dat for a couple of days. We weren't allowed to have booze in the tent lines. The old trick of survival was immediately put into action, we need something to cool our booze, and the plan to stop the Ice truck as it went thru the company circle was put into action. We send one dig to chat and delay the driver of the ice truck as we ripped 2 blocks of ice off the back and straight into the Tent line. Slabs of booze purchased the night

before went straight into two Hot box's pinched from the camp kitchen converted to Ice box's which we buried under the board walk though the centre of the tent. A few hours later we are into the chilled cans and playing cards when all of a sudden an incoming mortar from the local VC comes in very close to our tent line. Within a minute Lt Mead comes steaming through the tent with one foot straight into the esky and at the same time commanding every man to the perimeter and stand to positions. Mead gives Snow (His HQ Radio op) a burst to meet him down at 7 Platoon HQ bunker. Well Snow takes off like a greyhound with the radio swinging off his back. As we take off after him, Snow disappears in front of our eyes, Yep straight down the old 44 gal pisser. I dragged him out, (Phew) and last saw Snow heading down to HQ bunker. After a short period we were given the OK to stand down & back to the lines. On my way back to our lines I passed the HQ bunker seeing Snow sitting outside the entrance, "Mate what are you doing out here". Good old Meadie had given Snow the flick out of the bunker. He stank...poor bugger spent the whole stand to outside the Bunker. We then return to the lines & back into the cans. Well we soon flicked Snow out of our tent lines telling him to go shower, 5 minutes later he returns to tell us the Toilet & Shower block were gone, direct hit by the Mortar. (I slept well after knowing that was their best shot) Poor Snow had a very lonely night, Meadie never mentioned the missing Ice boxes, and the daily decoy of delaying the ice truck leaving Charlie Company continued.



Half Circle is supported by the Georges River Golf Course, Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall, (Bankstown Airport area). If you are in Sydney and feel like a hit, a feed and a drink, head for that venue. phone (02) 9724 1615. Course owner Geoff Grimish was kind enough to provide for the boys in Sydney to have a few drinks on ANZAC Day.

OUR PUBLICATION - HALF CIRCLE: This will be the last "Half Circle" for a few months, as Roslyn and I have decided to leave Sydney and head for the bush. We are relocating to Coonabarabran in North West NSW (between Tamworth and Dubbo). Until we are established, "Half Circle" must either have a rest, or preferably, have a C Coy bloke put up his hand and become the editor for a while. Any takers? I will give you all the contact details, etc. If we don't maintain "Half Circle", it will go the way of many other attempts to maintain a means of communication. Please contact me urgently (within a week, before our phone and communications are cut off and shifted) if you can help. Thanks, Don Harrod - (the Pirate). Our new email address and phone number will be advised when known.

A FINAL NOTE ABOUT THE 5RAR REUNION BEFORE I SIGN OFF:

Please ensure that your order and payment for memorabilia are made before 25th August. **IT CANNOT BE PURCHASED AT THE REUNION.**

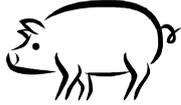
Please ensure that you have paid your registration fees for the reunion by the due date. **NO PAYMENT, NO ATTENDANCE.**

PLEASE REFER TO TIGER TAILS FOR FULL DETAILS



AT THE RAP:

Jack Lake - knee reconstruction (both knees). This photo isn't of Jack, but it looked good anyway.



I called the Swine Flu hotline today. All I got was crackling.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod (rosdon@bigpond.net.au), with help from Jack Lake, Dave Wilkins, Barrie Taylor, Vince Feenstra, Ian Cooper, Russell Hill, Kevin Mulligan, Fred Dwyer, Terry Bates, Chris Jenkins, Peter Knight, Bill Titley, some old photos, crook jokes, and The Aussie Digger's sense of humour.