

Half Circle



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(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.

A LETTER FROM ALLAN (BLUEY) AUSTIN: My old workers club which has a great display for the coal miners that worked in the 9 coal mines around the area, invited me back to the club this year to help open a commemoration of all those at served in every war. Being an ex vice president of the club I was guest of honour (photos to follow) What a great effort the club made [only 300 members] but the work on the coal miners display [year 2000] & war plaques ANZAC Day 2010] was unbelievable with both done by local people. They dragged 3 large rectangles of sandstone out of the bush, ground the faces and on the first they put WW1; the middle one WW2 with a large Rising Sun; the 3rd depicted the rest including Vietnam. They even put my mate Paul Edwards who was killed on my birthday 12/07/69 with 9RAR. he played football with me at Oakdale workers 1968 after we graduated from Kapooka. They also made a replica WW1 cannon out of scrap metal what a job they done looks real. When I send you the photo's, I'll put out a challenge to all the boys to see I there club has done anything like this. What a great honour for me and Paul; now he can be remembered like he should be. I had lots of tears to hold back. What a great club they've were almost bankrupt last year but still had time to honour us. A great day in my life to follow the 2010 reunion.

ANZAC DAY PICTON/OAKDALE NSW - JOHN HELLYER REPORTS: I spent ANZAC Day a little different from past years. This year I took my two grand daughters to our local march in Picton as the college had about 125 kids marching it was a great morning then in the afternoon we had a small service here in Oakdale and we had the unveiling of our new memorial and to my delight our mate Blue Austin was one of three Vietnam vets who had the honour of unveiling the memorial.

ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2010 – John Yabsley reports: I stayed with Geoff Pearson and was well looked after as always. I think Blue and Eddie missed you as they sent Tex Cunningham to replace you! I had the honour of placing the 5RAR Association wreath at Regimental Square. Ngarie Stephens (Rouster's widow) marched with us – how proud Rouster would have been. Dave Wilkins led the march, with Pearso and yours truly carrying the banner. Hope everyone else had just as good an ANZAC Day, commemorating our fallen.

ANZAC DAY SYDNEY 2010 - Alan Riley reports: The day started with overcast conditions and for those marching earlier there was some rain about. Not for us though as it had stopped by the time we formed up and started marching.

There appeared to be about 50 or 60 all up marching behind the 5RAR banner and probably not a bad turnout given the weather. Probably for the first time that I can remember we were marching with a band directly in front of us. Blue Schafer made the comment that it was the first time that we had probably all marched in step - and probably right too - as we know, without a band close by different beats echo off the city buildings making it difficult to stay in step.

The second tour guys marching were Dave Wilkins (who led the Battalion in the march), Peter Commerford, Blue Schafer, Geoff Pearson, John Yabsley, Paul McQueen, Eddie Moon, Alan Miles (who had come down from Kurri Kurri I think it was, for the weekend with his wife) and Alan Riley. Tex Cunningham missed the step off time for the march (doing his thing whatever he does at Ingleburn RSL first thing in the morning and then optimistically relying on State Rail to get him into town on time) but he did manage to catch up with us for lunch. Pleasing to see everyone looking so fit and well. Also, with us was Ngarie, widow of Wayne "Rouster" Stephens, who had passed away in August last year. Ngarie had come down from Lightning Ridge to march for him. It was lovely to have Ngarie with us and also to join us for lunch. She was not the only lady there as Geoff Pearson's wife Lyn also joined us for lunch.

I always enjoy this annual catch up and having a chat and a quiet drink after the march and this year was no exception. There was a sombre moment however as Dave asked for glasses to be raised in honour of Barry Williams following the sad news that Barry's health is rapidly declining. *Ed's note - see the latest article regarding Barry on page 5 in this issue of Half Circle.*



ANZAC Day in Melbourne - Ken Leggett, Don Teichelman and Phil Greenhalgh - they all look fit enough to go around again!

Another ANZAC Day Sydney report from Alan Miles – see the next issue of Tiger Tales.



ANZAC Day, Brisbane 2010. Peter McCauley and Vince Feenstra with the Banner.



ANZAC Day Walbundrie, NSW - Billy Waters (8PL Sig)

ANZAC DAY in Launceston - from Kevin Mulligan: It was a beaut day, and, 14 5RAR and 5/7RAR blokes marched under our banner. Mal Youd and I had a pleasant surprise when Peter McCarthy marched with us. Peter and his better half (Mary) are now residing in Tassie.

On a different note; when I was at the reunion in Tweed Heads, one of the Engineers attending gave me the phone number of Robert (Yogi) Earl. Yogi was the engineer with 7pl on 4th July '69. Despite being wounded by both mines he still battled on doing his job. I remember looking out the door of the chopper when we arrived and he had bayoneted his way to the edge of the blast area and had laid down a strip of mine tape - and was gesturing where the chopper was to land. We went straight past him and did what we were there for. After going in and out of the above area 4 or 5 times, I stopped and asked him if he was okay. That's when I realized He had an horrific leg wound and a shoulder wound. Yogi was on the last chopper out. He was discharged from the Army while still on crutches from his wounds.

It would be good if some of the old 7pl chaps could get in touch. He lives at Cessnock. His contact details are phone: (02) 4990 3601 or email: grizzley2788@bigpond.com

DEFINITION OF A DIET: The penalty for exceeding the feed limit.

RUSSELL (KIWI) HILL REPORTS: On the eve of ANZAC Day I was thinking of things gone by, when an old Tiger mate rang to say G'day.

After he'd hung up, it brought to mind an incident that is as clear today as ever before.

8PL was travelling with CHQ and our forward scout signalled that he had found tracks out front. We adopted our usual position and I went up for a sticky. Sure enough, the Ho Chi Minh sandal track was evident in the soft ground. Sunray 30 came up for a look and we decided that we needed a tracker and his dog. Paddy Walker and his dog Caesar duly arrived.

We set off in pursuit of the foe with Paddy and Caesar leading the way. The dog then stopped to indicate that all was not well on the other side of a large fallen tree. Whilst working out our plan of attack, Sunray 30 loomed out of the shadows and asked what the hell the hold-up was. Paddy explained that the dog had indicated that the foe was on the other side of the log in close proximity. Sunray got up, looked around and decided that all was OK, and we should get moving.

As the boss wandered off I heard Paddy say "I thought I was the black tracker here".

Years later I ran into Paddy in Caboolture and we had a beer and a really good laugh. Only those who knew Paddy could appreciate his sense of humour.

From Jack Bradd: **IT'S A SMALL COUNTRY, AND IT'S FULL OF TIGERS**

Unable to attend the reunion I was surprised and delighted when Andy McDougall informed me that he, Buddah Martini and Hippy Koppen were on their way to see me at Hervey Bay. Tex Nevins had already spent time with the diggers and told me he was glad he took the time to go to Tweed Heads to have a few cool ales with them.

I teed up some of the Tigers in town, Bill Titley (2IC C Coy), Mick Sinclair (PNR), Wally Barnett (Dogs) and Barry Baker, who had come down from Townsville. We met in the RSL and became an Ambush of Tigers, it was a great pirate night sinking many schooners. I was a bit wary of the man-hugs and kisses, especially from Hippy (Tex frowns on man-hugs and kisses) and the years rolled away as we yarned into the night.

About a week later Mick Browne rang, he and Dave Bowman were coming into town. I gave him directions to the RSL telling him to look for a grey haired bloke in a wheelchair. Another night of yarning and sinking schooners.

A while after this I received an email titled 'It's a small world' from Rod Lees (D Coy), he had bumped into and had a few ales with Mick Browne in Mildura as Mick was heading home to WA.

I mentioned this to Tex (he rings regularly and can understand me) he told me that he had met Rod Lees when he was a RSM in Tassie. Tex reckoned that he and a group of Sappers were lost in the snow in Tassie and when they were rescued the RSM looked after him. I realised that he was talking about Col Lees (D Coy). I worked with Col as a Drill SGT in Portsea and tried to emulate him as he was a top soldier, immaculate in dress and bearing, he used to stand next to me on Parade to look even better. I don't

know if Col knows that Tex was my machine gunner but I smile when I wonder what he would've done had he known at the time.

I appreciate those diggers coming all that way just to see me; they have left more memories to treasure. The only good thing about being Duty Drunk in a bloody wheelchair is it's hard to fall out of, though I have managed it, once.

New email address for 215548 W.H. Bradd - our mate Jack - boofaflex@hotmail.com

A SPECIAL NOTE: Major David French, OC of C Coy 5RAR 2010 has rallied his troops to submit articles on the life of the current C Coy digger - these are excellent! The plan was to have these placed on the 5RAR Association website, but for operational reasons, the current Battalion administration prefers that they remain as part of Half Circle at this time. It is great to know that the traditions set by us are being upheld 40+ years later. Many thanks Major French, and our sincere thanks to your diggers. Thank you all for your service for Australia. **A special issue of Half Circle, concentrating on the current 5RAR has issued.**



From Dave Wilkins: I have just received the attached photo from Barry Williams, renewing his wedding vows with his wife at Graceland, Memphis. He said to me:

"I made it Sir. It was a very special day for us both. Now for the 500 race in Indianapolis and a Memorial Day service and the "bucket list" is nearly done. I am and will be a Tiger forever."

Ed's note: As we all know, Barry is very ill, but is determined to get through his "Bucket List". This bloke typifies what the Aussie spirit, guts and determination are all about.

A bloke went to church and asked the minister if he could help him with his hearing. The minister took the bloke's head in his hands, looked up to the heavens and prayed like never before. When finished, he said "Has that helped you with your hearing?" The reply was "I don't know. It's not on till next Wednesday"

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - donharrod@bigpond.com, (02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with help from Bluey Austin, John Hellyer, Jack Bradd, John Yabsley, Don Teichelman, Alan Riley, Vince Feenstra, Alan Miles, Bill Waters, Kiwi Hill, Jack Bradd, Kevin Mulligan, David French, Dave Wilkins and crook jokes.