

Half Circle

Number 28 - March 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.

VALE:

Neal (Dartsa) Davis. Dartsa passed away on Sunday 15th February 2009 at the St John of God Hospital in Bunbury, WA, following a long illness. We will always remember him as a tough bloke from Kalgoorlie, extracted from the goldmines into National Service. After his initial training, Dartsa was posted to the Fifth Battalion, and into 8 Platoon. He served in Vietnam from February to October 1969 until his period of service had expired, and then returned to WA. We extended our sincere condolences to his family. Rest in Peace Dartsa, your duty is done.



Peter (Fred) McCarthy, who shared a tent with Dartsa, John Yabsley, Greg Dick, and later Barry Thompson, said:

As you probably know, Darts, Yabs (John Yabsley - later replaced by Barry Thompson when Yabs went to Mortars), Hickory (Greg Dick) and I were in the same tent in SVN, so, I'd like to share a couple of my memories of Darts with you if I may.

Firstly, he was a very good Darts player - hence his nick name. Another nick name which ultimately emerged was "Boxhead" and no more will be printed about that!!

Secondly, he had each of his four fingers on each hand tattooed with one of the letters "L", "O", "V", "E" and "H", "A", "T", "E": the significance of which, despite my persistent questioning, he never did disclose.

Thirdly, his favourite performer was Johnny Cash. Much to my and Yabs' annoyance, he not only owned every record Johnny Cash ever made but he had them all (don't ask me how) with him in SVN and, if he wasn't playing them on his record player whenever we were in 'the Dat', he was singing them and accompanying his awful singing on this bloody guitar that he or someone else (Yabs and I suspect a masochist or at least someone who didn't like us very much) found in the camp dump.

Fourthly, there was a certain person in authority who held a special place in Dartsa's heart, so, one night, he penned a message to this person; a message which would have left no doubt in the mind of any reader as to the extent of fraternal love the author held for the intended recipient. I don't think this person ever read the message as the mode of delivery was somewhat suspect; it was written on a piece of paper which was attached, by rubber band, to a weighty object of a type which had a tendency to burn and emit coloured smoke when its handle was removed. Oh, the message was delivered all right. It was amazing how, immediately after the mailman made his delivery, the night stillness was penetrated by a distinct hissing sound interspersed between anxious cries of "CSM, CSM" emanating from the person's location. Thence, every soldier in C Coy heard the patter of running, booted feet heading in the direction of eight platoon and, were it not for an abrupt cessation in the running sound almost instantaneously accompanied by a very loud shout of "SHIT" as the runner fell into a gun pit, every soldier within hearing distance would have known which tent the running feet entered. Had there been a tent inspection immediately after this incident, one soldier, who normally reclined in the bollocky, would have been found to have gone to bed that night fully kitted - uniform, boots and all - the only things missing were a weighty object, a sheet of writing paper and a rubber band.

Fifthly, he bought one of those 'you beaut' cameras which had every imaginable attachment - in built flash, zoom lens, tri-pod, carry-case - the lot. I think he took one photo with it and then it wouldn't work, so, he took it outside the hoochie and gave it something. Yabs, Hickory and I were encouraging him to return it to the PX and get an exchange: no way was that going to happen. He attacked it with his machete and wouldn't give up until it closely resembled one of Paddy's buns - except it was black - and then he did what he did with Paddy's buns - he ate it.

Sixthly, one night after a hard evening in the boozier, he and I brought a couple of cans back to the tent to have a quiet ale on our own when, suddenly, an unexpected and uninvited visitor, Captain Bill Titley, 'appeared' as if out of nowhere and accused us of 'having cans of alcohol in the lines': An outrageous accusation, of course. Well, he charged Dartsa and me with that offence and, in due course, we fronted the hearing conducted by Major Eric Richardson of Admin Company. I am pleased to be able to report that justice was indeed done as I, being the grub that I was and still am, was convicted on my own evidence and Dartsa, being the staunch and upright digger that he was, was, on his own evidence, exonerated and, while I served my two weeks CB (I got off lightly; other more fearsome leaders would have demanded execution), Darts supplied me with a nightly and seemingly inexhaustible supply of the amber refreshment. Much as it disgusts me to have to admit it, I can't recall going to bed, on any one of those CB nights, sober.

Finally, for what it's worth, it was not the Australian Army which taught me how to scout and recognise track signs (the army taught me how to be a machine gunner - didn't do that, an interpreter - did that in the Vung Tau bars, and a 16mm movie projectionist - didn't do that either), it was Dartsa Davis. Sadly, outside of our section and platoon, his bush skills went largely unnoticed.

Although I never saw Darts again after I left SVN, I will remember him as he was; a hard living, rough, knockabout bloke who, no doubt intimidated some because of his sometime fearsome demeanour but who, nonetheless, had a heart of gold. May his soul rest in peace.

Well, there are plenty more of those stories about Darts and I am sure Yabs and Hickory could add to the tale, but enough for me at this time.

Peter (Fred) McCarthy

Alan McNulty DCM, the 5RAR representative in WA reports..... It is with regret that I have to advise you that Peter Fraser MM passed away 7.30 pm Sunday 22nd February, with

his family by his side. Peter was a first tour digger, and fully deserved his Military Medal for his actions.

Don Harrod said.....What is Half Circle? "Half Circle" is named after the letter "C", with which we all have a great affinity. The idea to publish a C Company newsletter was born about two years ago, as it was realised that many of us had lost touch, and we weren't communicating with each other. It has gone from there, and each month we seem to find one or two of our mates. The only way "Half Circle" can continue is with your contributions. These can be pictures or words, but it is asked that all articles be fairly brief. Some of us have a limited computer allowance, and some (eg Owen Schmidt) are on satellite internet. Please keep in touch, as we have a bond that cannot be broken. If you want to say something, and don't know how to put it into words, just send it to me, I'll edit it for you. Don

C Company Faces:



Taffy Cheeseman



John Perry



Dave Bowman



Blue Newberry



John Roberts

The Inaugural C Coy Golf Game was held on Tuesday 11th February. Seven blokes, representing both tours of Vietnam attended, and enjoyed a good day, good fun, swapping yarns and having a meal. The owner of the golf course is Geoff Grimish, formerly of 102 Bty 12 Fd Regiment RAA, and a veteran of Fire Support Base Coral in 1968. Geoff welcomes veterans, and has offered his support for future activities. If you are in Sydney and want a game of golf, followed by the use of clubhouse facilities including good food, call in to the **Georges River Golf Club, Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall** (Bankstown Airport area).



The Australian Vietnam Veterans Reconstruction Group (AVVRG) has, with some support from the Department of Veterans Affairs, conducted an upgrade of the Long Tan Memorial on the site of the battle in Vietnam. Congratulations boys, the memory of this battle shall never be lost.

Andy MacDougal said..... 40 years later, there is no mistaking our mate Dennis (Tex) Nevins. Welcome back to the fold Tex, you have been missing for a lot of years. Tex is living in Beaudesert, Qld. **Note:** the slouch hat is still firmly in place!



Tex with John Marine, 1969



Tex in the bush, 2007

Here's a tip..... When life's getting you down and everything is getting on top of you, watch your wedding video backwards. The best bit is when you take the ring back, back out of the joint, and drive off with your mates.

Heard on the grapevine..... Don't lend this bloke any money; because you won't know what he looks like to get it back!! Rumour has it that one of the C Coy blokes is going to have a facelift. Well, actually, he's going to have his eyelids corrected, but a facelift sounds better. Then he is to have knee replacements. We can't tell you who it is, but he was our CSM.

A girl was trying to board a bus, but her mini skirt was way too tight. After trying to get onto the step, she decided to loosen the zipper at the back of her skirt. This didn't work, so she unzipped it a bit further. This still didn't help, and she couldn't reach the step. So she unzipped it a bit further. Still no good. Just then a man standing behind her grabbed her around the waist, and lifted her onto the step. She turned around, slapped his face, and said "How dare you touch my body? What gives you the right to grab me and lift me up?" He replied "Well since you've unzipped my fly three times, I thought we were friends".

RECENT DISASTERS: We all extend our thoughts and best wishes to all those who suffered in the Victorian bushfires and Queensland floods. We have mates in these areas, or those who have relations there who may have been severely affected. The Aussie spirit will never be broken.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod (rosdon@bigpond.net.au), with help from Andy MacDougal, Tex Nivens, Dave Wilkins, Taffy Cheeseman, Barry Morgan, Eddie Moon, Fred McCarthy, Alan McNulty DCM, old photos and terrible humour.
