

Half Circle

Number 30 - May 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 Gallery.....



Arrival at Vung Tau



The Orderly Room



The Esso Tiger



The Flags, Vung Tau

From the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Federation: The Drop-in-centre has opened at 8 Mary Street, Granville NSW, Tel 02 9682 1788. Facilities include high speed internet computers, large screen TV, library access, good chairs, good company, and a brew is always on. Membership of this Federation, which started as a group dedicated to the welfare of Vietnam Vets, is highly recommended.



In Sydney and would like to hit a golf ball? Then sprint to the Georges River Golf Club, Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish (a Vietnam Vet) and his team will make your day with a good course, good food, and a cool ale. Phone 02 9724 1615. Vietnam Vets welcome.

Jack Bradd said.....Grenade Hand Frag HE M26

Except for the MG No.1 and the M79 No. all diggers carried two of these grenades but to my knowledge little is known of their use.

I carried an SLR and managed to get hold of a launcher (slang term: spigot) and Ballistite Cartridges (very powerful case with a crimped neck and no bullet). These Ballistite rounds were capable of punching the grenade through thick weeds and were very effective. However the SLR required the gas plug to be turned upside down, all ball ammo removed and a Ballistite chambered, the safety clip and pin removed from the grenade then the grenade could be projected. A lot of diggers would not fire them twice because after picking themselves up from the ground would have to go searching for the SLR which normally went in the opposite direction of the grenade.

After firing the SLR had to be reconditioned to fire ball ammo though in an emergency it could fire single shots by re-cocking, not a good position to be in against AK47s.

The easiest place to carry the spigot was on the SLR and it was while we were working with the Cents (Centurion tanks) that a Turrethead asked me what that thing on the end of my SLR was. I told him it was a silencer, he replied in amazement 'You Crunchies get all the good gear'.

Most of the time I would use the grenade as it was meant to be used; by hand. However this had its drawbacks because as soon as I readied one a cry would go up 'Jacks got a grenade' and the SECT would disappear. After I threw the grenade the SECT would magically reappear.

After one contact the PLCOMD, Mr. Hosie, had a go at me by telling me to be careful where I threw my grenades as one had blown him over. I was concerned at this and showed him my two unused M26s, then a digger spoke up he reckoned the nogs had fired RPGs at the SECT (most probably aimed at myself and Tex our MG No1 as we were big blokes) and one of these had blown Mr. Hosie over. He bought me a beer at the end of the Op.

When I talk to diggers today, like SECT 2IC Barry Baker and MG No.1 Tex Nevins, they blame me for throwing grenades at them. I never threw grenades at Bazza but one of my grenades bounced back from a tree and landed under a huge rock that Tex had set the gun up on. The rock and Tex disappeared in the flash and smoke and dust but he was OK as pure Queenslander abuse echoed through the weeds, all of it directed at me. I learned a few new swear words that day and that was the only time Tex was ever a grenade magnet.

Jack Bradd also said.....CHARLIE COY ON PARADE NUI DAT RVN 1969

The sharp orders of the CSM rang through the rubber trees and Charlie Coy stood at ease, rested and waited.

The crisp, clear voice of the CSM was heard by every man of the Coy:

'The OC has directed me to read the crime statistics since we have been in country, they are:

One, Assault on bar girls: up 20%

Two, Robbery of bars: up 15%

Three, Thievery of Ox carts, horse carts, rickshaws, lambros and the misplacing of same: up 35%

Four, Attempted hi-jacking of RAAF helicopters and Cavalry M113s: up 50%. I would point out that threatening these crew with 'We got guns, take us to Australia' will not work as they do not have the fuel and their map reading is bloody hopeless.

Five, Thievery of items marked 'Property of US Government': up 75%. The OC assures you that any soldier fronting him on this charge will not be able to use the 'It wasn't nailed down' excuse. That's the statistics for 7 Platoon but 8 and 9 Platoons have nothing to be proud of. You have been warned.

COMPANY, DIS--MISS'



There are times in your life when you need a good woman to help balance things.

Barry Baker said..... I have recently visited Jack Bradd, had a good yarn and light refreshments with my former Section commander. The meeting prompted memories of a day we once had out in Sydney.

It was 1970 I was stationed at Singleton and Jack had only recently returned from SVN after his time with 8 RAR. We met downtown in Sydney around about the Wynyard Station end of George Street. After a short wait the pubs opened and we entered a nearby establishment to quench the thirst.

Around about the time of the second drink a couple of gentlemen entered the pub selling raffle tickets, the prize being a frozen chook. Jack being community minded bought a couple of tickets and was fortunate enough to win this bloody frozen chook. My thoughts were "what in the dickens do we want with a frozen chook"? Jack obviously had plans, he said "wait here I'll be back in a minute. True to his word he was only gone for a short time, and arrived back with a six pack (six packs and Jack are not uncommon) of cheap raffle tickets, the type you can get at all newsagents/shops.

Jack makes an announcement "next raffle" and begins to sell tickets in the raffle. "You give us a

hand and carry the chook" he tells me. I follow Jack and he moves along the bar selling, through a door into the saloon bar straight out the side of the pub into the street. "I haven't finished my beer" I wail, "stuff your beer, just get out of here".

Jack then explains how easy it was and plans his next move, it entails him going into the pub ordering a drink, I was to follow a short time later with this frozen chook and sell him the first ticket, this would get it started. I enter the pub and approach Jack and ask him to purchase a ticket to win a frozen chook. "How much" in a louder than normal voice. "10 cents a ticket" "Can you give me three for twenty" "ok" "what it is in aid of " "um ah" "where are you from". At about this time the barman leans across and asks who gave me permission to sell tickets in his pub. "ah um". "Get out and stay out". I left and waited down the street keeping an eye out for Jack. Approximately 30 minutes later Jack steps out of the pub, I wave and he saunters over. "I've been waiting for you" I said..... "You passion fingered idiot (he must have got that expression from a former section commander of his) can't you do anything right, you embarrassed me and I stayed and had a couple of beers to forget the humiliation" "sorry Jack"

At this stage the chook was not so frozen, but Jack still had plans with making a few more dollars before it completely thawed. My task now was simply to follow Jack carrying the chook. Into the pub we go "win a chook for the missus" "10 cents a ticket 3 for twenty" "only a few tickets left". The barman looked over, "spoke to the publican" says Jack. Through the bar, into the saloon bar out, and off up the street.

We only sold in a couple more pubs as the chook was completely thawed and water was running everywhere, Jack tossed the chook into a bin (at this time we were near Central Station). Jack was kind enough to buy me several drinks from the proceeds, however he kept reminding my of my feeble effort in the enterprise, and that the next time he wins a frozen chook he hopes he is with a more capable assistant.



Our network can find ANYONE. Here is a photo of Bill Titley, taken in 2008. Bill has weathered very well over all these years!

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod (rosdon@bigpond.net.au), with help from Vietnam Vets, Jack Bradd, Barry Baker, Dave Wilkins, and an unknown woman providing ballast for the tractor..