

Half Circle



Number 41 - May 2010

(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: 218012 LCPL Reginald (Reg) William Smith

Reg was born in Bingara, NSW, on 26 December 1949. On joining the Regular Army and following recruit training, he was allotted to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps.

In his time with 9 Platoon during our deployment to SVN in 1969/70, Reg was never what I could call the quintessential soldier. He was however committed to his trade as an infantryman. A barracks soldier? Hardly. He was in his element in the bush.

All of us who served with Reg will remember him as a typical Aussie larrikin and a bit of a rogue. As we all got to know, Reg was a gregarious character who loved his role as a digger. Typically, he got stuck into any task he was allocated and managed to provide a balance between professionalism and larrikinism. He was always quick with a joke, even if they were not always funny, and he was just as quick with a good story. Reg was also quick with an opinion. He was only too pleased to 'educate' anyone on the finer points of soldiering, especially the role of the forward scout.

My enduring memory of Reg will be his regular advice to me at reunions and on the occasions that he would telephone me at home in recent years to have a chat: **"Best forward scout in the business, hey Skipper!"**

Irrespective of the cards that were dealt Reg in his later years, he remained in my eye, a good soldier, a great team member and, to my wife and daughter who met him at platoon reunions, a lovable rogue. He had character and was a character.

Every team needed someone like Reg and we in 9 Platoon were fortunate to have him in our close-knit team. His loss leaves a gap that cannot be replaced and I for one already miss him.

Reg, despite our fundamental 'command and control' differences from time to time, was a good soldier and a good-natured, knock-about bloke.

Rest in peace, Reg. Your duty is done.

**LTCOL Roger Lambert (rtd)
Platoon Commander
9 Platoon, C Coy, 5 RAR**

SVN 1969/70



Have a close look at the two diggers on the left and right of the above photo, taken in Vietnam in 1969. They completed their respective careers as Lieutenant Colonel Barry Morgan and Major Mike Radwell.

Bob Hooper said: Finding a woman sobbing that she had locked her keys in her car, a passing soldier assures her that he can help. She looks on amazed as he removes his trousers, rolls them into a tight ball and rubs them against the car door. Magically it opens. "That's so clever," the woman gasps. "How did you do it?" "Easy," replies the man. "These are my khakis".

(If this joke doesn't qualify for the WORST of 2010, I'll eat my hat, Ed)

LATE MAIL FROM THE 45TH REUNION:

Peter Commerford said: It was great to catch up with the 8 Platoon diggers, and also "Genghis" Khan, Claude Ducker, Jack Lake et al. It was also a great pleasure to meet Thommo's sister Helen Keed. She appears to be a very nice lady and she indicated her son was in the Army (a paratrooper), and he had Thommos' photo on his locker (quite emotive). I congratulated the Committee for organising Helen being there. The Memorial Service was moving and Dinner was well received. "Tex" Cunningham reckons C Company had the largest number of tables there. There was plenty of food and good wine.



Speaking of Thommo, here is a picture of his sister Helen, with Bluey Austin at the 2010 reunion.

From John Hellyer: I often wondered how my parents/family/friends felt when I did my two trips to Vietnam. As there was no communication from the "system" to families, it must have been particularly hard on our mothers and wives. Well, things have changed! My son is currently on active service, and the Army has been brilliant in keeping us in touch. When my son was warned for overseas duty, we were invited to a family day at his unit, we were briefed on all aspects of his forthcoming tour, shown around the base, allowed to test-fire the weapons to be used, and treated to a great lunch. Since our son has deployed, we have had emails from the Army, had family get-togethers, and received phone calls and emails from him. I have been told by military personnel that this has come about because of the way those who served in Vietnam were treated. Ed's note: I think that most of us have one major regret about our service in Vietnam - we had no idea at the time how hard it was on our wives and mothers - they must have dreaded answering the telephone or a knock on the door during our twelve months away.



You're never too old!! Dennis "Tex" Nevins got his first tattoo at age 62. What a masterpiece! Always keen to support his mates and provide encouragement, Jack Bradd simply said "I'll buy you some earrings to go with it".



Still fit as a fiddle after all these years - Taffy Cheeseman at Mt Halifax, Townsville. Taffy has walked the Kokoda Track five times, and says that Mt Halifax is probably more difficult. Taffy conducts treks of the mountain, and his next six-day adventure starts on May 1. Any starters?

The teacher showed a picture of an animal to the primary school class, and asked the kids to identify it. One boy said "It's a frickin' elephant" Horrified, the teacher asked him not to use that kind of language. The kid replied "It's a frickin' elephant, it says so on the picture" - A F R I C A N E L E P H A N T.



"Half Circle" is supported by the Georges River Golf Club, Henry Lawson Drive, Georges Hall (Sydney). If you are in Sydney, call in for a game, a feed or a beer. All veterans are most welcome. Phone (02) 9724 1615

The May 2010 edition of Half Circle: As for last year, I would ask those of you who are marching in various cities and towns in Australia to send in a paragraph of how you spent ANZAC Day. Last year's Half Circle with a State round-up probably provided more information than that which was submitted to the more formal ex-service publications. Let's continue to show them the way!!

An old Irish farmer's dog goes missing and he's inconsolable.
His wife says "Why don't you put an advert in the paper?"
He does, but two weeks later the dog is still missing.
"What did you put in the paper?" his wife asks.
"Here boy" he replies.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - donharrod@bigpond.com, (02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with help from Roger Lambert, Mike Radwell, Peter Commerford, Bob Hooper, Bluey Austin, John Hellyer, Tex Nevins (via Sarah), Taffy Cheeseman, the photo gallery and the usual crook humour.