

Half Circle



Number 53 - May 2011

(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 should be sourced from Veterans' Organisations.



A 9PL group at Millicent, SA, March 2011: Ben Oram, Fred Dwyer, Jock Phillips, Dennis Manhood, Don Teichelman, Phil Winney and Blue Schafer. It was, however, a sad reunion, as the group had gathered to farewell Dianne Manhood, who passed away following a long illness.

ANDY MACDOUGAL writes: My wife Ginny and I were in Brisbane a few weeks ago and decided to make a quick trip up to Hervey Bay to see Jack Bradd. Despite not being as mobile as he was (legs not too good, and a voice like an RSM who hasn't used his parade ground voice for six months and comes back and barks at the Battalion for 2 hours straight), he was in great form.

At Jack's front gate, visitors are confronted by a sign that reads "MILITARY POLICE GUARD DOGS PATROL THESE PREMISES - KEEP OUT". The dogs must have been around the back, but the Aussie flag was flying high so I knew Jack was probably still alive. His house was as clean as a new pin – great to see that Jack hasn't dropped his standards!! To keep his arthritis at bay, Jack is a keen model maker. Frankly I have never seen anything like it. Scale models of every infantry weapon you could think of, all meticulously built and painted. It was the sort of work that catches your eye when walking past one of those expensive model shops. Also tanks (Centurions of course), M113's, choppers, planes and even the Navy was represented. On his work bench there was something else that seemed a little out of place – 2 unopened cans of sardines. I asked Jack if this was lunch, and he said no they were a present from Barry Baker who visited the other day! Jack also showed us a video sent to him by Dennis "Digger" Nivens. He has built a number of tree houses around his house – all

interconnected by rope walkways. His grandchildren love them. Of course there was an assault course for Jack in his old age, a nog track complete with ambush positions and a big sign that says "Jack Bradd says that the only good n*g is a dead one". Well done Digger and daughter Sarah!

I am sure Jack would welcome any (nice) visitors.

Ed's Note: Poor Jack must be doing cartwheels (or giving himself an uppercut), after hearing that the new RSM of Kapooka is a female from the Royal Australian Corps of Transport. Well done, WO1 Trudy Casey!!

I'm not an organ donor, but I did give a piano to the Salvation Army once.

Ian Leis continues with these memories of his mates:

"Remembering those of 8 Platoon who are no longer with us"

I remember the following soldiers some more than others. But they are part of our military family and are often remembered and spoken about by many of us. I have added some personal information to there names. Many will remember much more or have a tale to tell about these men. They are never forgotten and often pass through my mind.

"Our Sergeant" Colin Cooper: "*Bucket Arse*"

A big man not only in physique but in stamina and heart. A good administrator. I remember he had a dainty walk, very neat and precise even in the J. I often shared some extra rum rations with this man as not all drank their allocation. Complications from diabetes took his life. *RIP*

Neil Davis: "*Dartsa*"

The Johnny Cash of 8 Platoon. The darts player. The phantom of the smoke grenade!! Dartsa and I had quite a few nights in Liverpool together. He never walked away from a confrontation and liked a fight. He was a rifleman in 5 section, a work horse who often carried more than his share of the platoons armament requirements. It was a pleasure to once again be in Dartsa's company whilst attending a reunion in Warren organised by Rouster & Ngarie Stephens in 1997. Nothing had changed, the friendship continued, there had been no gap. Dartsa was just as I remembered. A tumour/head cancer took his life. *RIP*

Mick Dobbs: "*Buddha*"

He came from a big farming family in Rockhampton. Being a little older than many of the platoon he was one of the father figures. He was very much responsible for keeping Geoff Pearson out of trouble. Giving care and direction that helped many of us. Buddha I believe was accidentally killed on the family farm not long after his service in SVN. *RIP*

Rod Heinze: "*Rowdy*"

A close resemblance to Clint Eastwood gained him his nickname. At Holsworthy Rowdy looked after the swimming pool - maintenance and supervision. He was very fit and enjoyed all the training that came our way. Paddy Walker and Rowdy were good mates. It was through him that I became a mate of the "Mr Paddy Walker" and shared many a flight to Brisbane with Paddy for weekend leave where they would pour us off the plane. Rowdy became very successful in business post-military service. Sadly Rowdy took his own life. *RIP*

Greg Parish: *"The Reverend"*

He was given his nickname in relation to his surname. He was small of build but a capable soldier. I believe he was a National Serviceman. He was a very quiet person remaining in the background most of the time. I have been told that Greg died in a suspicious accident. *RIP*

Elwyn Rayner: *"Gomer"*

As his nickname suggests he was another Gomer Pyle from the TV show, "Goll-Lee". A National Serviceman from Tasmania where his family owned and operated a timber business. Gomer had a protected life before his military commitment. He liked his alcohol and the military camaraderie. He also liked to have many haircuts whilst on R&C at "Vungers". I believe Gomer was accidentally killed when a bulldozer rolled and trapped him. This was not long after his discharge from military service. *RIP*

Bill Ross: *"Poxy"*

Another National Serviceman who was a friend to all who knew him. He took leave from the banking industry to complete two years of service. Bill had the nickname of Poxy given to him by his mates for reasons not as the name suggests. He had an acne/skin blemish problem thus his nickname. He was another person good at remaining in the background and out of trouble. He was a very capable person during his time in the military. These capabilities saw him return to the banking industry and being very successful in civilian life. I have been fortunate to have been in Bills' company on a number of occasions since SVN. Cancer took his life. *RIP*

Paul Monaghan was another of 8 Platoon who did their basic and corps training together. I do not have any further information on Paul but remember him as part of the Platoon. *RIP*

The two Platoon Commanders who led whilst I was in 8 Platoon:

1. Chuck Stamp. A Canadian who trained us at Holsworthy and was at the helm in SVN. "Yeah-eh", his favourite saying. He was our leader but he was one of us (you know what I mean). Many of 8 Platoon will remember "Hey Rouster, when you're going through the J try and do it a bit quieter eh!!". I don't know how long Chuck remained in the military. However our paths crossed a few years back when I believe he was a company director (CEO) of a huge furniture supply chain. He remembered me, respect was given both ways and it was good to once again be in his company. Some kind of brain tumour - cancer took Chuck's life. *RIP*

2. Brian Thripp *"Three pence"(small change)*. Thripp was another good leader easy to get along with and always followed through with any and all commitments he made. I was his radio operator for a short period of time during which he showed me a great deal of patience. He was also the one who nominated me to do a junior NCO's course. In the mid 70's - whilst working as a civilian contractor within the Enoggera Army Base, I was again privileged to spend some time with the then Captain Brian Thripp. He certainly made sure I didn't go away thirsty. Sadly I have been told that not long after that time Thripp died. *RIP*

The information I have shared with you regarding these fellow diggers may not all be correct. It is what I have remembered and been told or read and I believe to be reasonably true and correct.

PS I acknowledge the passing of our good mate "Rouster" Wayne Stephens. Since 1988 I have been privileged to have spent some time with Rouster and will share some more of that time in more detail at a later date.

DAVE'S DIARY: Continued from last edition of Half Circle.

My diary entries are in *italics* whilst additional explanatory or descriptive commentary is in plain text:

8 Nov

We took another resupply today and I have things running almost the way I want them. From the previous system used by the Coy I have cut down the time by about 1½ to 2 hours. I don't think I can reduce the time any more but can probably improve the system by reducing the scramble of the clearing parties on the chopper pad.

We received a resupply about every 5 days, sometimes longer, depending on the type of operation, the amount of enemy activity and the state of play. The LZ would be secured by all-round defence with sentries posted further out, away from the chopper noise. Work parties were arranged for unloading each chopper, for sorting and distributing the resupply. We usually received the small Australian 24-hour ration pack (for 2 to 3 days' rations), plus three days' rations from the bulkier and tastier US Army C rations and "Sup packs" (US Army Supplementary ration packs containing cigarettes, toothpaste, shaving gear, chewing gum, writing gear and paperback books). Sgt Paddy Cahill, our company cook, would at times also include a meat and salad roll and a cold 'goffer' (can of soft drink) for each man, which was a wonderful treat, immediately consumed.

Our clothes were usually putrid and rotting by this time so a clothing change was always welcome. Freshly-laundered greens and socks came in section lots. Each set of shirt and trousers was marked with a person's distinctive laundry number. For example, as 2ic of C Company my number was "PC2". Later, the outgoing greens would be returned to Nui Dat and sent on to a contractor in Baria for laundering. If clothing was rotten or ripped, they would be replaced with the equivalent size, and remarked with the individual's laundry number. This needed some good organisation on the admin side of the house, keeping details of every soldier's clothing, hat and boot sizes.

The ration packs, once unpacked, left a lot of rubbish so this was also back-loaded on a chopper before we moved off. Mail was received and letters to home were sent out. Not everyone was lucky enough to receive a morale-boosting letter so many were passed around between close mates to share.

We also received ammo and water, and so by the time all this was packed away into our kit, we were bursting at the seams and weighing like a Sumo wrestler.



Re-supply

11-15 Nov

I returned to Nui Dat with my batman, Don Frohmuller during this period in order to straighten out a few administration problems such as pay, subject B testing for NCO promotion, Group 9 training for other persons, a 100% stock take, etc, etc. Don, a laid-back Nasho from Woy Woy, was a reliable sort of bloke who looked after me well.



Don Frohmuller

The Digs never cease to amaze me! After being told repeatedly about the dangers of ammunition in the tent lines, I found hundreds of rounds and about a dozen grenades in the lines during an inspection I made. If they were in a serviceable condition I don't suppose it would be so bad, but when the safety pin and striker lever of a grenade are rusted, living becomes quite hazardous. (to be continued)



GET A HAIRCUT!!!!!!

We all remember Jack Lake's most commonly used instruction. Here is proof that we took notice, with Ian Leis is giving the treatment to Geoff Pearson.

An Englishman, a Scotsman, an Irishman, a Latvian, a Turk, an Aussie, a Yank, an Egyptian, a Japanese, a Mexican, a Spaniard, a Greek, a Russian, an Estonian, a German, an Italian, a Pole, a Lithuanian, a Swede, a Finn, an Israeli, a Romanian, a Bulgarian, a Serb, a Czech, and a Swiss man walk into a pub.

The bouncer says, "Sorry, I can't let you in without a Thai."



STOP THE PRESSES....

From John Hellyer – this is a photo of the ANZAC Day ceremony at Long Tan, five days ago. A great turnout – but no medals, no flags, etc. John advises that it was a most moving ceremony, and an appropriate tribute to the eighteen diggers from D Coy 6RAR who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Lest we Forget.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - 02 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, (donharrod@bigpond.com), with help from Ian Leis, David Wilkins, Bryan (Blue) Schafer, Andy Macdougall, and more crook jokes..