

# Half Circle



Number 131 - November 2017

This informal publication is for the members of C Coy 5 RAR (2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## News from Claude Ducker

Claude Ducker tells us that in August he turned his hand, along with Judith, to raising money for Parkinson's ACT. He has advanced Parkinson's. The money was required to help fund a nurse to be trained and dedicated to the care of about 1000 Parkies in Canberra and surrounding districts.

Judith wrote to many of his friends of his Duntroon days, and along with other friends they contributed over \$3,000. Along with his wife and daughter, Sallyann, he won a prize for the most donations collected as a team – just under \$5,000. Claude also won the individual prize for the person who raised the most money.

He was very pleased to win a "Fitbit", which is worn on the wrist and shows how many steps he walks per day, how many calories are burnt, and how much sleep he has each night. It is a very useful item to have. Perhaps it would have been handy to check on sentries in Vietnam!

Daughter Sallyann was the organiser of the "Walk In The Park" – a walk of 1.6 kilometres on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.

The conditions turned out to be freezing, but Claude enjoyed the walk. His Excellency Governor-General, General Sir Peter Cosgrove is the Patron of Parkinson's Australia. General Cosgrove had two postings with 5 RAR as Adjutant and Company Commander. He took part in the walk along with over 300 other frozen souls who braved the icy conditions. Soon after General Cosgrove arrived at the site of the Walk, he spent some time in conversation with Claude, mentioning his connection with 5 RAR.

Altogether Parkinson's ACT has raised \$40,000, which was double the amount raised when the walk was held two years ago. As all the work was done by volunteers, and all prizes given at the Walk were donated, almost all of this sum will go towards supporting people living with Parkinson's.

Claude sends his regards to all.



Claude with Lady Cosgrove and His Excellency the Governor General



The Governor General with Claude



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**AT THE RAP:**

**Barrie Taylor** – ongoing oncology treatment

**Wally Magalas** – ongoing oncology treatment

**Peter Molloy** – spinal nerve therapy related to prosthetic leg

**Colin Summerfield** - medical

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A North Vietnamese kitchen, 1969.  
(Photo by Ian Leis)



## TRAVELLING ABOUT:



This photo was taken in Tamworth NSW on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017, during a “Let’s drop in on.....” visit to Colin Summerfield, who has not been well. Pictured are Eric Hamlin (Port Macquarie NSW), Max Postle (Bribie Island, Qld), Don Harrod, Colin Summerfield and Ben Oram (Hervey Bay, Qld).

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### **Remembering the American “C” Ration Packs or More Correctly, “Meal, Combat, Individual”**

The American “C” rations were a welcome supplement to the Australian 24-hour Ration Pack. The only problem with the US rations was that one box constituted one meal so it was necessary to issue three boxes to equate to the 24-hour pack. In the early stages of our tour, because of the bulkiness of the US rations, many items were discarded to save weight. We were carrying enough weight already what with weapons, ammunition (including spare 100 round belts for the GPMG M60), fragmentation grenades, smoke grenades, thermal grenades, 66mm LAWs, Claymore mines, spare ANPRC-25 Set radio batteries and of course, water supplies. However, as our tour of duty wore on and we became leaner and fitter (if that was possible), less items from the US rations were left on base at the beginning of an operation or disposed of in the field after the cans were punctured to render them useless to the enemy.



The choices of 'entrees' and main meals included, among other 'treats', Chicken or Turkey Loaf, Ham and Eggs, Boned Chicken or Turkey, Ham and Lima Beans, Beans with Frankfurter Chunks in Tomato Sauce and Spaghetti and Meatballs. The Ham and Lima Beans was never a popular meal and many derogatory names were applied to this concoction. Enough said.



'Dessert' consisted of Pound Cake, Fruit Cake and Pecan Roll. There were also crackers, cheese and jam spread.



Each box also had an Accessory Pack which contained salt, pepper, sugar, [instant coffee](#), non-dairy creamer, a packet of toilet paper, a four-pack of commercial-grade [cigarettes](#), and a book of 20 cardboard moisture-proof matches. Typical commercial cigarette brands issued in the cigarette ration were [Camel](#), [Chesterfield](#), [Kent](#), [Kool](#), [Lucky Strike](#), [Marlboro](#), [Pall Mall](#), [Salem](#), or [Winston](#). Then there were the Supplementary Packs that would come out with resupplies which contained cartons

of cigarettes. Can you imagine that happening in this day and age? (Being the only menthol smoker in the platoon, you can guess where the Kool and Salem ended up ...)

Of course, our 24-hour ration packs and the 'C' rations were all enhanced with Tabasco Sauce, curry powder and even onions in some cases. By late tour, there were many creative 'delicacies' being cooked whenever a hot meal was possible.

Then there were the Australian dehydrated rations packs. But that's another story.

### **Roger Lambert**

**(Platoon Commander, 9 Platoon, 1969/70)**

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In response to the Pallamacca Ghost story from Dennis Nevins (Half Circle No130), I have another tale – although not as descriptive as Dennis':

I first started work as a farm hand in the North Eastern Wheatbelt town of Kununoppin, WA just before my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The property was only 8km from town, so easily accessible on my pushbike. The only problem was late on a Saturday afternoon or Sunday when not working, and after pedalling into town, everything was closed.

On the western side of the town, about the same distance away, a farmer by the name of Mr Cahill owned a property. He also engaged a boy as a farmhand. One weekend Mr Cahill told his charge that the family would be going away for a few days, and to remain on the property to oversee the stock and security.

The young bloke, Ted, decided to have a look around in the bosses' absence. He ventured from his quarters up to the main homestead – a typical building with verandahs all around – parts were covered in with louvres and/or shade cloth, and used as sleepouts. In one corner of the verandah, a section was partitioned off, and the door shut. Curiosity got the better of Ted, so he opened the door. The room was full of coffins! Ted bolted, thinking that he was to be the future occupant of one of these. Like he was in the Tour de France, he came pedalling flat out down the driveway of the property I was on, blurted out what he had seen, turned his pushbike around, took off and was never seen again.

It was only some time later that I found out that Mr Cahill was also the local funeral director and coffin maker.

Don Harrod

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**From David Wilkins** – How to Catch a Mud Crab. Open the link below, and enjoy!

### **How to Catch A Mud Crab**

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#### **FROM DAVID FRENCH, former OC C Coy 5RAR, and Commander Combat Team Charlie, Afghanistan:**

“I have built a site to try and encourage Australians to write to their MPs and Senators to sort out some of the issues with DVA. If after you have a look at the link below and think that the site is worthwhile, you might wish to consider it. I just want Australians to get engaged on this issue”.

<https://lettersforveterans.wordpress.com/>

***Ed's note:** Half Circle is designed to be non-political, and to be a means of communication where we can continue our mateship. There are, however, times where some of us have not seemed to have received the best results from DVA. David has opened a means where letters may be sent where it is felt that Members of our Federal Parliament may be requested to represent us. Over to you! **Formal advice, when needed, should be sourced from Veterans' Organisations.***

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#### **Blonde Password**

During a recent password audit by her bank, it was found that a blonde was using the following password: MickeyMinniePlutoHueyLouieDeweyDonaldGoofy

When asked why such a big password, she said ..... "Well you told me it had to be at least 8 characters long".

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