

Half Circle



Number 155 - November 2019

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.

215608 VICTOR MAXWELL CAMERON 27 November 1946 - 18 October 2019

CPL Victor 'Max' Cameron died on Friday 18 October at his home in Walligan, in the Hervey Bay area of Queensland. He had been quite ill for some time.

Max first saw service in South Vietnam with 1 RAR from January to June 1966 and he was WIA in April. When 1 RAR returned to Australia he joined 6 RAR until he completed his deployment in December 1966.

He later joined C Company 5 RAR and redeployed with the Battalion to SVN on 28 January 1969, serving with C Company. Max suffered a non-battle casualty in April which necessitated his return to Australia.

We believe that a private family funeral was held on Saturday 26 October in Hervey Bay.



AT THE RAP: Peter Commerford, Barrie Taylor. We send our best wishes to our mates who are not as well as they would like to be, and also to Lorraine Postle.

HALF CIRCLE: The 5RAR Association Webmaster, Ted Harrison, has been working behind the scene to consolidate all the back issues of our publication. Ted has gone back to the first issue in 2006 – thirteen years ago - and gone right through to this issue. Thanks, Ted, for such a great job! The following links will get you to all the back issues
Just to inform you that the Back Issues page is now available online as a link underneath your half circle logo here:

<https://www.5rar.asn.au/contents.htm> and go to the Half Circle logo on the front page, or you can access it directly from here:

<https://www.5rar.asn.au/half-circle/half-circle-archive.htm>

THE 5RAR FINAL REUNION: Time is running out to register for the last reunion of 5RAR from the Vietnam era. Gary Townsend (Memberships Officer and Editor Tiger Tales) assisted by other coordinators, is spending incredible hours putting this together. You can help by registering as soon as possible. Refer to the August edition of Tiger Tales for details.



Remembering 7PL in 2008 at Coober Pedy – photo courtesy of Ken Leggett



Also from Ken Leggett – ANZAC Day in Coober Pedy, 2008

Patrols into the Stone Age

Part 2- A Cannibal Raid & Death Rituals

By Dave Wilkins

In the previous Half Circle article, I described one of my patrols in Papua New Guinea in 1966 where I encountered primitive tribes who practised cannibalism. The story continues:

Upon returning to Nomad Patrol Post a week later I asked John Kelly, the Kiap, if he had any recent records involving cannibal behaviour. As the local government administrator, chief of police, prosecutor and magistrate, all tied up into one, he was able to provide a description from a court proceeding of a deadly raid upon another tribe. I made a note of it:

“Cannibalism. (A description following a deadly raid upon another tribe)

“After the victims have been slain, they are picked up and carried with all possible haste to the nearest creek. Not a moment must be lost. With a few swift cuts of the bamboo knife through the stomach the bodies are halved. The head and legs are pulled backwards, the spinal cord snaps. A few more swift cuts with the knife and the legs are separated. Already someone has snatched up a leg and thrown it across his shoulder. If there is no more time the head, with chest and arms still attached, is filled into a string bag and carried off. But preferably the head is detached, sawed off. A rope is threaded through the nasal septum (through the bamboo nose piece) and then with much delight the triumphant victor swings the hapless head over his shoulder and carries it off.

The whole business takes only seconds. The blood is washed into the creek and they all take to their heels. Now triumphant it would be disastrous to be caught weighted down with their trophies.”

I also made a copy from a note in the Kiap’s log book describing the process following the death of a warrior in a local village:

“Death and the Corpse.

.... When a person dies, and especially an adult male, he is laid out on the floor of the communal house. The women mourners gather around it, shrouded in their dismal tapa capes. For the next week or longer they keep up a continual wail whilst the corpse swells and the body fluids and greases seep out. The women occasionally caress the body and transfer some of the grease to their own skin. The hair is removed and apparently buried.

After approximately the 7th day the men prepare a mortuary platform. It is slightly elevated about 6 feet off the ground. A further platform is built around it so that after the body is placed in state, the women may climb to it and continue to weep over it. The body is now left to decompose under the weather. The dead person’s belongings, ornaments, and bundles of food are brought to the platform and laid at his feet.

As the body decays the bones become bleached by the sun and are stacked in small heaps. Still the women climb up the platform and weep over him.

When the skull is further bleached it may be put into a string bag and hung from the ceiling of the communal house.”



The decaying corps on a mortuary platform in the Biami region of PNG (1960s).



TRAVELLING ABOUT:

9PL ANNUAL REUNION. 9PL have just completed their 2019 Annual Reunion at Port Macquarie, NSW. Details below:



FROM BLUE SCHAFFER: The Platoon had a great four day reunion at Port Macquarie which was organised by Pam Hamlin who did an excellent job. Above is a picture of a rock on the breakwall at Port Macquarie, duly signed by us all.

FROM PHIL GREENHALGH: I attach a few photos from the 9 Platoon reunion at Port Macquarie. The Hamlin family should be publicly congratulated for arranging accommodation and events for this reunion. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves, the golfers played up to their usual handicaps, i.e. lawn bowls are looking good. As you know Marion and I visited Col Summerfield and took him out to dinner. I also called him from Port Macquarie and a few of the fellow grunts spoke to him, which brightened him up a bit.

REMEMBERING,
ANZAC DAY, 1997
 AT "WARREN REUNION"
 BY - ROUSTER & NGARIE STEPHENS



PETER MOLLOY "No.10" | WAYNE STEPHENS "ROUSTER" | JACK LAKE "YAP. YAP" | CLAUDE DICKER. "THE FEATHERED WARRIOR"



PADDY WALKER "ROUSTER" | BARNES NEIL SIMPSON.
 - A MOST REWARDING REUNION -



A THOUGHT: If my body is ever found on a “jogging trail”, you should know that I was probably murdered somewhere else and dumped there.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – donharrod@bigpond.com, 0418 423 313, with help from Ken Leggett, David Wilkins Blue Schafer, Phil Greenhalgh and Ian Leis, behind-the-scenes assistance from Gary Townsend (the Tiger Tales Editor), Ted Harrison (the SRAR Association Webmaster), **supported by The RB Co, and powered by the Lambs Valley Wine Company, Hunter Valley, NSW.**