

Half Circle

Number 23 - October 2008

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.

Peter Commerford (8PI Commander late in our tour) said.....

I left school in 1964 after 4 years at Boarding School. I enjoyed Cadets at school and Rugby was compulsory.

After school I began working at the local courts and enrolled in the Barristers Admission Board's examinations, kept playing Rugby in the local sub-district competition, did lots of body surfing and spear fishing then joined the Army Reserve and was selected for Officer Training. At that time I was thinking of joining up full time so when I was called up in 1968 I was not concerned and deferred my University studies. I was lucky to be selected for Scheyville and fortunate I guess, to graduate. I was then posted to the Recruit Training Battalion in Wagga Wagga. After being there for a few months I requested a posting to Vietnam.

I arrived in Vietnam late 1969, and was posted to 5 RAR early December.

We seemed to have lots of contacts when I arrived and some of the Diggers in the Platoon jokingly complained they did not want to go "bush with me".

After 5 RAR returned I was posted to 1 ARU for several months which was a bit of "respite" after all the action with 5 RAR.

However, I was bored with all the training and requested a transfer back to a Battalion, which was granted in July 1970.

During that time in 7 RAR it was pretty quiet and we did not have many Contacts.

In late 1970 I was discharged from the Army and I returned home where I tried to resume studies but had many problems settling in and ended up failing a Law exam.

I met my wonderful wife in 1972.

In 1974 I embarked on a DO Training Course with DOCS, married my wife built a house and had our first child. I spent over 30 years with DOCS, am still married to my wife, remain in our original house and have 2 great kids. I continued studying many courses over the years and completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree majoring in Psychology and Sociology.

I am now enjoying RETIREMENT.

Ed's note: Peter was a very well liked and respected officer, and had an outstanding career with DOCS, a department full of challenges, with the responsibility of child welfare. Peter has also had many challenges regarding his health, and has met these head-on. An inspiration. Thanks, Pete.

A bloke I know said.....

I was at the local service station the other day, filling the tank up, when my mobile rang. I answered it, and all of a sudden there was a spark, an explosion, and my right arm was on fire. The bloke at the servo was really quick, put out the fire, and managed to call the ambos and police at the same time. After it was all over, the copper said "I am going to charge you" I asked him what with, and he replied "For having an illegal fire arm".

Bob Hooper sent this in.....The Perimeter

The Perimeter, in the infantry, is a circle of men. It is half a squad, platoon or company. One half

is on guard, staying vigilant, watching for the enemy, while the other half rests, sleeps and carries on with life as it is. They are more than just men; they are a brotherhood in uniform.

They share their plans, dreams and hopes with each other. In hard times, they share their sadness, fears and pain. They face the enemy together, some like brothers, others like fathers and sons, and always as true friends. They find a spirit in each other than binds them to one another in a bond that lasts forever.

As time passes, they will leave the service and each other. They will travel many different paths of life, some to prosper well and others not so well. Somewhere in life's travels, these men find themselves lost in the world, confused, dazed, scared, unhappy and searching for something; something they are not even sure exists. They are not soldiers anymore; they are called veterans.

Somehow, in their search, they once again find others like themselves. They find brothers of the past, brothers of the Perimeter, that circle of safety, where someone else shares their pain, their confusion and their fear. That Perimeter where that fear is eased, where there is less confusion. They share each other's pain in stories, in tears and in silence. Inside the Perimeter, eye contact can say it all. This Perimeter is a circle of life and a circle of death; it is a circle of wounded warriors, with wounds of both flesh and spirit. This Perimeter is a circle of iron that has never broken. It is a circle of common duty that knows no colour, no creed and no religious ground. The circle will last forever, through the best of times and the worst of times.

The Perimeter is a place warriors will always seek - even for eternity. Just gaze out at our national cemeteries. For out there, on the outer edge, ever so vigilant, are those on the Perimeter.
by James R. Lawson

I was at an ATM money machine when an old lady came up and asked me to check her balance.
So I pushed her over.

We heard from..... Adam Ross, son of Bill, 7PI. For those who didn't know, Bill passed away in 2004. Adam contacted the Battalion website (see the Guestbook), advising that he has a lot of mementos from his Dad's service. I have asked Adam if he would like to contribute to "Half Circle" in memory of Bill. Thanks to those who supplied these photos. Ed



A young Bill in Nui Dat



Bill the Digger



and with Barry Baker and Jack Lake

Correction..... Bluey Austin lives at Nelson Bay, not the NSW Central Coast - about 120km from where we reported!

FLASHBACK..... 8 PI group:

