

Half Circle



Number 58 - October 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 camaraderie. Entries should be sourced from Veterans' Organisations.

From the Diary of Capt David Wilkins, OC C Coy December 1969 to March 1970

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:

3-10 Dec 1969

We have moved back to the north of FSPB Cape, owing to a renewed threat in that area. The Intelligence people inform us that MR7 plan a three-battalion attack on Thai Thien and Tam Phuoc Military posts on Route 15. We, C Company, have been placed forward in the area of the possible approach routes, about 10,000 metres north-east of Thai Thien, to act as advance troops, with the aim of disrupting and pre-empting the enemy move.



A South Vietnamese Regional Force (RF) Military Post.

A, B and D Companies, as well as tanks, APCs and RF/PF troops, have been sited closer to route 15 as a screen, to prevent the actual attack.

Most of our resultant contacts turned out to be against troops of 274 Regiment, mostly in their bunker systems along creek lines and in the bamboo.

The anticipated major enemy assault did not eventuate however.

7 Dec: the battalion has notched up its 300th enemy kill, by body count. On passing 296 a few days ago, the 5th Battalion passed the previous record for an Australian battalion in Vietnam (6RAR on its first tour).

One of our contacts with the enemy showed the effectiveness of close artillery support when enemy in their bunkers were pinned down by the arty rounds falling on them, and close to us, as we attacked. You must keep it coming without a break, and no letting up otherwise it gives the enemy a chance to look out and observe us attacking them.

During this operation (“Kings Cross”) the battalion was involved in 82 engagements with the enemy forces, some prolonged, some short. Nineteen of these were in the four days from 1st to 4th November, indicative of the concentration of NVA and Viet Cong Main Force presence here. Much of the fighting was in dense secondary undergrowth and bamboo forests. In all, over 600 bunkers and weapon pits were located, but, despite the difficulties in attacking these, 5RAR achieved its highest kill ratio against an enemy entrenched in such defences. This was partly due to the aggressive actions of the battalion with its strong, mobile armoured support, partly due to the increased use of M72 rocket launchers against bunkers, and partly due to the re-introduction of rifle-launched M26 grenades, which by effectively penetrating the forest and bamboo foliage before detonating, ensured greater firepower against the whole of a bunker system and not just the closest elements. In all, there were 53 enemy KIA (by body count), at least 22 WIA and another 5 prisoners captured. Our own casualties were 4 killed and 19 wounded.

(to be continued)

From Half Circle Number 57:

Some of the more interesting suggested solutions about the brass object in the picture in Half Circle Number 57 were:



- * Unprintable
- * A rice crusher
- * A musical instrument

In fact, it was the heavy handle to the lid of a brass sugar bowl. The phallic knob was beneath and supporting the lid with the handle protruding through a hole so that it could be used to lift the lid.

AT THE RAP: Ian Cooper. Coops, our Company Medic, has been battling oesophagus and stomach cancer and other associated illnesses for some time now, has had and is having heaps of treatment. His attitude is a true inspiration to all of us. Best wishes Coops. This bloke has a totally positive outlook.

2790814 PTE WAYNE VINCENT MANGAN. We have been notified of the passing of Wayne Mangan, aged 63. Wayne was a resident of northern NSW. He joined C Coy in July 1969, and returned to Sydney with the battalion in March 1970. Your editor can't remember much of Wayne, and needs your help to write a fitting tribute to him for the 5RAR website and Tiger Tales. We think he was a member of 7PL. Can anyone please help? It would be a sad day if we had lost a colleague and he wasn't properly remembered. Please treat this request with the priority it deserves. Rest in Peace Wayne, your duty is done.

IAN LEIS REMEMBERS: Leisy wasn't able to supply his usual monthly article on this occasion - and it will be missed by all of us. However, this shouldn't prevent any other bloke from having a go, and putting a few words together. REMEMBER - Half Circle is YOUR newsletter - I only edit it. All you need to do is write something, and I'll do the editing, spelling, etc for you.

FOUND: Pauline Hosie - widow of the late Ian "Hoss" Hosie. Pauline is now a successful author, and is going where others hesitate to venture - she is writing about mental health - an issue which is too often avoided. When she completes some current projects, Pauline will communicate with Hoss' old colleagues through this newsletter.

FROM BOB (TEX) CUNNINGHAM: Following Leisy's article on me in the last Half Circle, Could you please put the following additions and correction in your next edition:

- * I re married in 2007 to Janice
- * During my service I was not only a rifleman but forward scout, number 2 gunner, then gunner, temporary radio man, and arse end Charlie, then picked to be a stretcher bearer but it was cancelled.
- * As you can see I got around. I tell you one thing I would rather be a scout than being arse end Charlie. I am also a Life Member to both the Ingleburn RSL Club and Sub-Branch.

Regards Tex

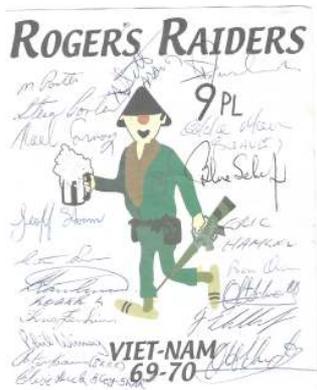


In Sydney and want to hit the little white ball? Then head for the Georges River Golf Course, Henry Lawson Drive Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish and his team will make you most welcome. Geoff is a Vietnam vet (RAA), and is a great supporter of this newsletter. Phone (02) 9724 1615.

RULES TO REMEMBER IN LIFE:

1. Money cannot buy happiness but it's more comfortable to cry in a Mercedes than on a bicycle.
2. Forgive your enemy but remember the bastard's name.
3. Help someone when they are in trouble and they will remember you...when they're in trouble again.

4. Many people are alive only because it's illegal to shoot them.
5. Alcohol does not solve any problems, but then again neither does milk.



A BLAST FROM THE PAST: Major Dave French, OC C Coy 5RAR (current) has contacted us and asked for any memorabilia from our Vietnam tour which could be used to decorate the C Coy section of the Garry Holmes Club (the boozier). We have sent the Company "Mushroom Club", 8PL "Snoopy", and 9PL "Andy Capp" photos. What about 7PL?? Someone from Speedy's platoon must have something. Please help - quickly!! (Note how grotty the diggers greens are - that's what happens when there is no efficient laundry system and the need for a beer overrides all else!)



Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod - 02 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, donharrod@bigpond.com with help from Dave Wilkins, Tex Cunningham, David French, Colin Summerfield, with news from Ian Cooper and Pauline Hosie.