

Half Circle



Number 82 - October 2013

(If this is hard to read, try increasing the picture size to 150%!!)

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.



AT THE RAP:



Bob Cunningham - oncology treatment -
Lynette Sturgess - medical

yep, it's Tex!

JACK BRADD'S WORD POSER: POGO

The official term is "*Personnel on Garrison Operations*", although many diggers have come up with other terms.

From Roger Lambert: "Pogo or Poag - A soldier not involved in combat. Usually in protected areas well behind the front lines. Comes from POAG (Posted On A Garrison) or POGO (Posted on garrison operations). Also the term was used in the Vietnam era as rhyming slang for 'Pogo Stick' (rhyming with 'Prick'). This term is often used by any soldier against any other soldier or group who he/she perceives as living an easier life than their own. Can also take the form "pogue" (Person Of Greater Use Elsewhere), same spelling as used for "Person Other than Grunt"."

DAVE'S DIARY:

Continued from the previous edition of Half Circle. My diary entries are in *italics* whilst additional data from Battalion and Task Force logs, as well as explanatory or descriptive commentary, are in plain text:

17-26 Feb

Back in the Dat there was a memorial battalion service held on the 17th.

Clean up of base area in preparation for handover to 7RAR, which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ron Gray, an old squash foe of mine. Together in Australia we had perfected the game of "contact squash" where rivalry to reach the ball at all costs and to prevent your opponent from any advantage became an art form.

5RAR's Advance Party, under command of Capt Tim Britten (D Coy) departed SVN for Australia by civil air on 18 February.

The battalion was gathered in the rubber (see photos) to be addressed by the Task Force Commander, Brigadier S.P. Wier. He thanked the Tigers for a job well done and wished us well for the future.

On the C Coy front, I notice from Bn ROs that:

1. All canteens and messes were to be closed at 2130 hours, cleared and all lights out (in the canteens and messes) before 2200 hours.
2. Coy canteen hours for sale of liquor were 1630-1730 and 1930-2130.
3. No member of 5RAR regardless of rank was to visit other messes in the Task Force without permission of CO or 2IC 5RAR.
4. There was also a 1 ATF curfew. This all arose from the fragging murder in 9RAR during their last week(s) in base before RTA.
5. Reveille was adjusted to 0630. Each coy conducted 15 minutes of PT at 0645 daily. The only exceptions were people like Paddy and Pirate because of their very important positions. The "happy pill" parade followed PT so I forget how Paddy and Pirate got theirs. Maybe they just got malaria.
6. LCpl John Hellyer was the battalion duty projectionist for the week.

C Coy's activities in addition to our packing, and cleaning the area in preparation for RTA were:

19 Feb- stand-by ready reaction coy; TAOR ptl;

20 Feb- ready reaction coy;

21 Feb- "Hawk Flight" (I don't recall what this was. Can anyone assist?); TAOR ptl;

22 Feb- Duty Coy;

23 Feb- stand-by ready reaction coy;

24 Feb- ready reaction coy;

25-26 Feb- final admin;

27 Feb- RTA of main body.

Whether or not the extended period in the bush to minimise our time in Nui Dat base camp and the reduction of alcohol available during the pack-up of the battalion were warranted will never be known, but the fact is that 5RAR did not experience any troubles during this phase.

My diary makes reference to this and the potential alcohol problem:

This period passed without incident, the soldiers being surprisingly well-behaved despite restriction placed on grog, and a "dry" camp for the last two days. The success of this is probably due to there being equal restrictions for ALL ranks (and I suspect, the diggers having learnt how to be very cunning in not being sprung).

The final duty was a hand-over ceremony of our defensive position at Nui Dat to 7RAR, the Porky Battalion; but not before some provocative and generally crude pig jokes were made wishing them well for the coming year. For them it was 365 and a wakey.

26 Feb

A wake-up only before we depart.

(To be continued)





***Ed's Note:** Following Dave's very detailed account of our last week in Vietnam, who can remember the "BOMBS" or "HOMER BOMBS" - the final week's dose of anti-malarial pills - the ones that made us feel like when we had finished the course of these, there would be nothing left of us to send home anyway! Don.*

VIETNAM VETERANS' DAY 2013 - HERVEY BAY, QLD:

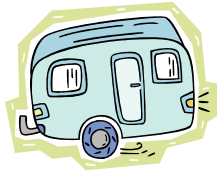
There was a good attendance of C Coy members at Hervey Bay on 18th August. Geoff and Liz Storm, on their way home from a trip to Darwin, met up with the unquenchables shown in the following photos:



The formal photo: Jim Lowry, Geoff Storm, Bill Titley, Ben Oram, Allan Austin, Barry Baker, and Max Postle.



The reunion: Geoff Storm, Allan Austin, Ben Oram, Greg Blair, Barry Baker, and Max Postle.



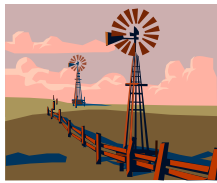
TRAVELLING ABOUT:

Our spies tell us that Jack and Susan Lake were recently in Hervey Bay, Qld. They got together with Bill Titley, Jack Bradd, Barry Baker and Ben Oram, and many old stories were re-visited. Barry Baker also got the blame for Jack Lake having a headache big enough to photograph. Jack and Sue were last heard of somewhere on the Sunshine Coast.

THIS MONTH'S OTHER WORD: SCHMICK, SMICK.

This word was widely used in the 1960s and 70s, to advise whether or not a person knew what was going on. For instance, if asked the status of something, the reply would be "I haven't got a schmick". It was also reported that it took a million schmicks to make half a Schmoo, and a million Schmoo's to make half a clue, and "So and so wouldn't have a Schmick". Remember?

When I was young, I was scared of the dark. Now, when I receive my power bill, I'm scared of the lights.



There are a lot of tourists, campers, bushwalkers, sightseers and visitors to the home town of your editor. Most are great people, but others have trouble understanding some things rural. A few weeks ago I was talking to a bloke who was describing a windmill he had seen in a local paddock. He said "What are those big spinning things for?"

I told him that they keep the sheep and cattle cool on hot days.



This is similar to what may have been typical in a South-East Asian country we visited around 1969/70.

55695 LCPL AL GEERNAERT: The 5RAR Association website has been contacted by Bill Geernaert, son of Al. 8PL members will remember Al as the forward scout that we inherited from 1RAR when we relieved them in February 1969. Al was also known as the little Canadian bloke with the big ginger moustache - a good soldier, and a good mate. Bill writes: *My father served with 5RAR on its second tour of Vietnam as a member of 6 Section 8PL. He's back in Canada now, and since 1970, has had little contact with his mates in 43 years. Dad would love to hear from any of his old friends. He has heard that Tex Cunningham has not been well. Al has very fond memories of Tex. Anyone who would like to get in touch with Dad, please email me at troopergeernaert@gmail.com*

IN THE NEXT EDITION OF HALF CIRCLE:

Haven't got a clue.

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