

# Half Circle



Number 57 - September 2011

**(Please increase picture size to 150% for a better read!)**

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.

**OUR NEW HALF CIRCLE LOGO:** Gary Townsend, Editor of Tiger Tales, and a member of 7 Platoon Vietnam 1966/67 has offered us a new logo, depicting our ribbon bar and C Company details. Thanks Gary, most appreciated. Gary has also created a new website for C Company first tour. Have a look at the "Mushroom Club" website:  
<http://cgtownsend.com>

**AT THE RAP:** Ian Leis reports that he met up with Richard Prater (8PL) at the Greenslopes Private Hospital, Brisbane recently. Richard has not been travelling too well, and would appreciate any contact from his old mates. His direct bedside phone number is (07) 3329 3365.



Makes sense to me!

## 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:

*From the diary of Captain David Wilkins, OC C Coy Dec 1969 to March 1970*

23 Nov

*The Coy returns to Nui Dat today for a two-day rest at the R & C Centre in Vung Tau.*

26 Nov

*What a time was had by all at Vungers!*

We partied hard but also had time to enjoy some lovely French cuisine and wine in the French quarter of Vung Tau: Ian Hosie, Roger Lambert, Jack Lake, Eddie O'Reilly (?), Tony Wass and myself.

After some unbecoming behaviour from ugly Aussies we finished the Vungers evening with the 7-inch brass object shown in the photo. Can anyone guess what it is? Please submit your suggestions to Pirate for publication of the best few in the next edition.



Remember, your suggested solutions about the brass object to your editor (Pirate) by 25<sup>th</sup> September.

A clue: No, it's NOT what you think!

*And now we are hard at it again in the "J", this time in the bamboo forest just to the east of Thai Thien on Route 15. 8 Platoon had its first contact (by itself) for a month or so, and a successful little action it was too! Got 2 enemy dead, 3 weapons, some marked maps and 6,000 piastre. It appears one of the KIA was an NVA officer of captain or major rank.*

On reflection, the rapid turn around from being on operations one day to being on leave as a company at Vungers the next two days and then back out in the scrub on ops again on the fourth day, is mind boggling. We must have been pretty efficient. And little wonder we played hard when the opportunity arose.

(to be continued)



***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.

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**WHO REMEMBERS** 312645 PTE Frank L Moore, 7PL? Frank came to 7PL as a reinforcement. Our C Company contacts have contacted Frank, living in Portland, Vic. Your editor has telephone contact details for Frank if required.

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**C COMPANY (FIRST TOUR):** A reunion for the First Tour is to be held in Portland Vic on ANZAC Day next year, with our National President Roger Wainwright giving the address. If this concerns you, please contact [darylmccombe@gmail.com](mailto:darylmccombe@gmail.com)

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My neighbour knocked on my door at 2:30am this morning, can you believe that: - 2:30am? Luckily for him I was still up playing my Drums.

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Ian Leis remembers -  
**2789441 Pte Robert Cunningham**  
12<sup>th</sup> National Service Intake

: Nickname: Tex



Janice and Bob

Tex was employed in an aluminium factory making window frames before his call up. He came from a very supportive family and parents who advised and assisted their children. Tex also enjoyed a close relationship with his father throughout his life.

As for the nickname of "Tex". He acquired this because of his cowboy attitude/style he brought to the military and also the manner of which he wore his bush hat - with the sides rolled up. He was placed in 4 Section, 8 Platoon as a rifleman on arrival at C Company 5RAR, a position he remained in for most of his tour of Vietnam.

Tex completed his rookie training at "Puckapunyal" and his infantry corps training within the battalion. Like many of us new to the military it was a shock to the system - routine. Tex claims his time spent in the "Boys Brigade" helped him adjust and he soon settled into the routine of army life. Unfortunately Tex does not remember those who trained and spent time with him during the early period of his training. Maybe somebody could put a little light on this time for him?

Tex enjoyed his military service making many lifelong friends. He was wounded late in his tour of Vietnam. This resulted in the loss of sight to one eye and severe damage to the other. However, he retained his sight to that eye after major medical assistance, received at 2 Military Hospital at Ingleburn, on his return/medivac to Australia. After his discharge Tex had trouble settling back into civvie street. He tried many jobs before settling into the import/export industry, handling freight, storage and distribution.

He married in 1970 and has two sons and one daughter. He enjoyed family life and continued supporting his family working as a truck driver, doing deliveries across the state of NSW.

Unfortunately his marriage failed and Tex entered a very dark unsettled time of his life. The family unit that he enjoyed fell apart. This was a lonely time for Tex. Health problems increased, nervous problems and skin irritations are ongoing problems for him. He has sought and received assistance from DVA. He is TPI.

Tex has devoted much of his time in helping fellow veterans and war widows. Being on the Board of Directors at Ingleburn RSL (a former president), also working for legacy(legatee) assisting war widows. He is also on the committee of the "National Servicemen's Organisation". In his spare time he has assisted the Lions Club of Ingleburn.

Today Tex has started a new life supported by his partner Janice. The future looks good. Currently Tex is slowly retiring from most of these organisations. He is trying to be more physically active to assist his health. It is time for Janice and Tex to enjoy life and spend quality time together.

Thankyou Tex, Robert Cunningham. You are part of the military family to which we all belong. You put your best foot forward and assisted out Battalion 5 RAR, to achieve the results in SVN we are so proud of. You have also stood out with your ongoing assistance to the veteran community.

*FOOTNOTE from Leisy:*

Before putting pen to paper and writing my short stories regarding the original members of 8 Platoon I have spoken to many of them to ensure at least some of my memories were correct.

Whilst speaking to our mates, it was brought to my attention that basically to a man - we the diggers now have a huge respect for the 99.9% of those who were our leaders. Of the officers and senior/junior NCO's, not only within our company but throughout the Battalion. Also to acknowledge that many of the junior NCO's performed jobs that they didn't really want but did anyway.

Maybe this respect has come with maturity or having had responsibility during our lives with family and business. However leadership on all levels was what made our Battalion stand out. Leaders who took their responsibility seriously and showed care and professionalism, which we diggers did not see or acknowledge at the time. Sure we did what was required to stay out of trouble but not much more when a little extra effort, understanding and acceptance may have made our leader's job a little easier. So on behalf of the 99.9% of the members who I have spoken with I would like to:-

1. Acknowledge these facets and to say "Thankyou" for your efforts and understanding given during our training and preparation for Vietnam.
2. Especially your leadership and guidance during our time in Vietnam.
3. And from those who were injured, to acknowledge your determination to fulfil what you were trained to do and organise successful extraction to medical treatment in the shortest time possible.

4. Also to see today, the camaraderie and equal acceptance of all involved with our effort as an Australian Military Unit.

We the diggers of 8 Platoon, C Company, 5RAR 1969, are proud to acknowledge those who led us.

*TASK:*

*What about someone from those who led us making the effort to tell us a little about the lives of these men. Writing an article for Half Circle about their early history, positions held in military and civilian life, post military life and today. Come on and help Pirate with some interesting reading for Half Circle.*

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