

Half Circle



SPECIAL EDITION: JACK BRADD - THE TRUE STORY

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.

FROM YOUR EDITOR: Everyone who served with C Company 5RAR in Vietnam in 1969/70 knew, or encountered Jack Bradd at some stage. This special edition recounts some of the stories and exploits of Jack, and the thoughts of those who knew him best. *Don*

215548

WO2 Warren (Jack) Herbert Bradd OAM

03/01/1944 – 19/08/2016

I served in four battalions of the Regiment on active service. And when I am asked, “who were you with?”

I always answer, “5 RAR”

Cpl Jack Bradd, C Company, 5 RAR, 1969-70

The following is the Eulogy, prepared and read by Andy MacDougal at Jack's funeral:

Thank you all for being here today.

We have received a large number of messages from those who could not be here. To all those who have contacted Barry and myself, we say thank-you. To all those who could not come, but who are here in spirit, we feel your presence.

Jack Bradd was intensely proud to serve as an Australian Infantry soldier. He was acutely aware of the impact the WWI diggers had on future generations of the Australian Infantry soldiers. He was intensely determined to continue that tradition. And there is no doubt he succeeded.

That tradition is not just about bravery on the battlefield – and Jack had that in spades.

That tradition is about never forgetting who you are and where you came from - Australia - this wonderful country of ours.

That tradition is about never forgetting those who did not return, or returned broken of body and mind.

That tradition is about never forgetting the families, who after all the passing years still grieve deeply for those who did not return, and those who still care for their sons, husbands, brothers, uncles and dear friends.

That tradition of the Aussie Digger has another deeply imbedded element – the larrikan! And Jack had that in spades.

How about this recollection from Don Harrod:

Ros (Don's girlfriend at the time) and I had only met about a week or so before we were invited to a party at Jack's in Cleveland Street, Darlington (inner Sydney). All went well until the Britannia pub next door shut, and we proceeded with the party. At some stage, Jack went upstairs, and soon after, a smoke grenade activated, and Cleveland Street took on a different hue.

That was bad, but when Jack threw a plastic snake onto Ros' lap, all hell broke loose! She freaked out, and our new friendship almost halted there. Somehow, she settled down, and we celebrate our 45th wedding anniversary in a week or two.

Or from Ken Leggett:

Cpl Bradd would come into our tent in the early hours, and kick all four of us diggers out of bed. He would then produce a bottle of his favorite rum, and insist we all drink it with him – all of it. This was a regular event! The next mornings were deadly for us, but Jack was as bright as a button.

I think Jack Lake summed it up nicely – “Jack was a great bush soldier”.

I would like to reflect on two lines from George Mansford's “Vale to WO2 Jack Bradd: True Blue” (You will hear the full poem shortly)

“He and his comrades in arms were always as one
So many of them were taught by him and so were their sons”

The first time I met Jack Bradd was at the Infantry Centre at Singleton, NSW in 1968. Jack came in as an instructor half way through our 13 week Corp Training. The change in our

understanding and appreciation of what it took to be an infantry soldier was dramatic. His leadership was totally inspiring. None of the parade ground formality. Jack told us that we would be real diggers by the time we marched out. He was a wonderful “teacher” in addition to being an “instructor”. The skills of weapon usage, formations, navigation, contact drills etc. can be taught and learnt. But Jack gave us something extra: he hammered into us the need to be aggressive, decisive, determined, and unyielding when face to face with the enemy – just like the Diggers of old.

As John Martini said to me on the phone from South Africa last week “Jack saved our lives even before we went to Vietnam”. Half a dozen of us from that unit would later be posted to 7 Platoon.

7 Platoon was decimated by mines on July 4 1969. Only 5 survived death or wounds that night. And one of those who survived that dark night with horrific wounds is here today – Jim Lowry. 7 Platoon had to be reformed from scratch. A number of “Reo’s” came in from the Reinforcement Unit, Lt Ian Hosie came in from Tracker Plt to replace the badly injured Lt David Mead. No time for lengthy training as a unit. Back into the bush we went.

After a month when we experienced heavy fighting and lost more great soldiers and great mates, we returned to Nui Dat.

And then Jack Bradd marched into 7 Platoon. Those who knew him were overjoyed. And the reaction from those who did not know him was equally enthusiastic as demonstrated in an email from Hippy Koppen this morning:

“The first time ever I saw Jack with that rifle and machine gun I knew I would be safe all through the war”

The platoon was restructured - Jack became Section Commander of 1 Section 7 Platoon and second tour veteran Cpl Dave Bowman came in from 9 Platoon. Two of Trackers’ best, Dennis Nevins and Alex (Hippy) Koppen followed their old skipper to 7. Of Jack’s 1 Section here today are machine gunner Dennis Nevins, scout Neville Hayne, rifleman Michael Kostiuk, and myself. Also from 7 Platoon here today are Barry Baker, Vince Feenstra, and of course Jim Lowry whom I mentioned previously.

Infantry soldiers develop an extremely close bond that lasts a lifetime, and this bond has its genesis in the infantry section. Our sections were never more than 6 men. When fighting the enemy all those skills taught must be recalled instantly. You must know exactly what to do and you must execute without hesitation. You rely on your mates and they rely on you – for your very lives.

Whilst the other Platoons and the Bn as a whole had been training together for several months, the “New 7 Platoon” had to learn the hard way – through fighting a well-armed and experienced enemy. Gradually we got to know the soldiers in the rest of the Platoon and then in the wider company. And over time that bond forged in bloody conflict broadened to include the entire Battalion, and for all of us, 5 RAR and the broader Regiment became our family.

Jack excelled as a Section Commander. In battle he was in his element. Controlled aggression, decisive, unyielding. We willingly followed his lead without hesitation. Very soon it became clear to us that our Platoon Commander Lt Ian Hosie (our “boss” or “skipper”) had the same qualities – that mongrel, that decisiveness, that determination, that unyielding spirit, that leadership. As Jack said to me a few years ago “Mr Hosie always looked for trouble, and generally found it” (the “trouble” referred to was of course the enemy).

From the carnage of July 4 1969, 7 Platoon emerged once more into a very efficient fighting unit.

By mid-1970 we were home.

Jack's health deteriorated over many years. He never complained. He never forgot his many friends and his Army mates. Jack had no surviving family, but he did have the 5 RAR family and the Regiment family.

There is one person here today who brought to Jack a never ending ray of sunshine - Sara Nevins, daughter of 1 Section machine gunner Digger Nevins. In addition to her own family duties, Sara was in regular contact with Jack. She was always there for him. Sara's sister Sam (who was serving in the Army) was also there to help.

A number of Jack's former comrades visited Jack over the years, many coming from all over Australia – Dave Bowman, Buddah Martini, Rod Lees, Jim & Lesley Lowry, Max Postle, Eric Hamlin, Claude Ducker, and Alex (Hippy) Koppen coming from UK. I am sure there were many more. The day before he died, Neville Hayne came from Moree. These were the extended 5 RAR family that Jack felt totally at home with.

Many of the everyday decisions concerning Jack's well-being needed to be taken locally in Hervey Bay, and here his great friend and fearless soldier Barry Baker came to the fore, as did his daughter Amanda. Bill Titley has been tireless, and Bill continues his work with the broader defence community through his close membership of Legacy.

On behalf of Jack To Sara and all who have supported Jack over the years – thankyou.

That key element of the Australian Infantry soldier - that tradition of never forgetting the families of those who did not return or whom had since departed was intensely important to Jack. He was very aware that they still grieve deeply.

And to this end, in his final years Jack decided to do something extraordinary. He wanted to demonstrate to the widow of Ian Hosie, the esteem and affection that the soldiers of 7 Platoon had for her Hoss (as he was known to the family and his Duntroon colleagues). The "how to do this" was solved when he was talking to Amanda Cook - one of the nursing home staff who is here today, who was a quilter. She told Jack that it was possible to print photographs onto fabric, and for the fabric to be made into a quilt.

So Jack started a process that would take nearly 18 months to complete. He and Barry Baker contacted as many 7 Platoon members and fellow officers who served under Ian Hosie as they could, and asked them to send a photo of themselves and a few sentences that would express their feelings about Ian Hosie.

And whom among us would make contact with the Governor General of Australia, and invite him to participate in this tribute? Jack discovered Ian Hosie and Sir Peter were classmates at Duntroon, so he wrote to him. The Governor General sent a photograph and a letter for inclusion on The Quilt.

Last Friday I called the Governor Generals office and followed up with an email to advise him of Jack's death, and to ask if he had received a photograph of The Quilt. I received a same day reply

-----Original Message-----

From: XXX

Sent: Friday, 26 August 2016 3:41 PM

To: ANDY MACDOUGAL

Subject: FW: Quilt in Honor of Maj Ian Hosie OAM, contributed to by Sir Peter Cosgrove [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear Mr MacDougal

Many thanks for your email with the sad news of Mr Bradd's passing. I will be certain to let the Governor-General know when he returns to the office next week.

We did receive an email and letter from Mr Bradd, with some photos after the quilt was completed, but we'd be delighted to see more photos, if it's not too much trouble. It was a bit hard to get a good impression of the quilt from the photos the Governor-General received.

I would be grateful if you would pass on the Governor-General's condolences and greetings to those present at Mr Bradd's funeral who the Governor-General may have known.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Governor-General.

Kind regards

XXX

Today we have present another special person - the widow of Maj Ian Hosie OAM – Pauline. And Pauline has brought The Quilt, and has written a tribute to Jack "Forever in Our Hearts". You can view The Quilt at the RSL after this service.

Pauline, thank you so much for being here today, and thank-you to your children John and Samantha who were present when The Quilt was presented.

The quilt has already touched the lives of others.

I would like to read an email I received from the sister of Jim Macmillan who was killed on July 30, 1969 whilst serving with 7 Platoon on operations in the Hat Dich Secret zone:

From: Alan & Venie Jolley

Sent: Tuesday, 16 August 2016 9:58 AM

To: Andy MacDougal

Subject: Re: 7 Platoon quilt featuring Jim

Dear Andy

Thank you very much for the for the photo and email of The Quilt it looks fantastic and it was great idea of Jack Bradd.

Tonight we have a civic reception for the Vietnam Vet in Horsham and my sisters and husband and our brother Rob and his wife from Queensland will be here as well which will be nice to have us all together to remember Jim.

Then on Thursday we will all march.

Thank you again for keeping in touch, we are sorry our Dad and Mum are not here to see that all the Vietnam Vets are finally be recognized for want you all did, and if it had been done when you all come home from Vietnam as we would have hoped, most off the men would not have gone through want they have done since then.

Regards Venie Alan and our family

A photo of Jim Macmillan is on the quilt.

And another email from Robert Reid, the son of Jim Reid – a former 1 Section scout.

From: Rob & Lisa Reid
Sent: Tuesday, 16 August 2016 4:16 PM
To: Andy MacDougal
Cc: warren bradd;dennis nevens; Alex & Fran Koppen
Subject: Re: 7 Platoon quilt featuring Jim

Hi Andy,

That quilt is absolutely awesome and such a tribute for a fine soldier! dad did mention Hosie to me when he did open up about the war.

As discussed this morning I had some pictures of dad during Pukka restored and are absolutely awesome and I also arranged for a ADF headstone for Dad's gravesite which I have attached I have also attached a picture of dad with my son James who was born in 2009.

Please stay in touch was great to hear from you

Kind Regards to you and all of the diggers from 7pl.

Rob Reid

Jim died a few years ago. I was in Perth at the time and was able to represent his Army mates at the funeral. They had very little knowledge of what he did, and certainly nothing about the circumstances leading to the horrendous wounds he suffered. I should say that Jim replaced Neville Hayne as scout in 1 Section after Neville was evacuated back to Australia. When Jim marched into 7 Plt he said to Jack that he wanted to be a scout. Jack asked him what he did in civi street Jim said "I was a cloth cutter". Jack and I looked at each other and our eyes rolled. Jack soon had him in shape and he turned out to be a very effective and brave scout. We figured his ability to spot small details that were "out of place" was due to his previous trade.

The families of these decreased Diggers now know how important and how valued they were to their fellow soldiers, and they know that we who survive will never forget that their family pain is shared by us all.

Both these cases reflect the power of The Quilt. It is doing exactly what Jack had anticipated and more. Whilst The Quilt is finished, Jack had in progress the printing of a small book based on The Quilt that could be shared by all. He has asked Claude Ducker to write a Forward to the book, and this has been done. Jack has asked that the title of the book reads:

AN AMBUSH OF TIGERS
DIGGERS' TRIBUTE TO AN OFFICER OF
GOD'S GIFT TO THE WORLD
THE AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY

We must not forget the lessons that Jack imparted on us.
He never forgot about the families and friends of the diggers.

Jack had the knack of making his presence felt in any situation in the most unexpected ways!
When Jack walked into a room, a bar, a tent or when we were lying "doggo" in the killer group

of an ambush - you just knew he was there. His leadership inspired confidence in his men, but forever he remained humble and kind.

I would like to end with the last verse of Brig George Mansford's wonderful tribute to WO2 Warren (Jack) Bradd OAM.

*He'll be there with each generation marching into its tomorrow
Urging all that leadership is about having those who will readily follow
Be assured his never yielding spirit will always be near
Watching all of us going forward in a land he held so dear*

Yes, the Diggers of WWI would have been proud to have Jack among them – and now, he is with them.

Andy MacDougal
7 Platoon C Company
5 RAR
South Vietnam 1969-70



Andy MacDougal reading the Eulogy



Dennis Nevins remembering his mate

From Barry Baker: Over the last 4 years Jack had become part of my family again and my daughter Amanda and Alexander would always ensure that when they came down to Hervey Bay that "uncle" Jack was on their list to see. Jack always bought presents for the grand kid(s) on birthdays and Christmas, he always knew the dates. Jack was always interested in the well being of many families of former unit members.

Brig George Mansford writes:

So long Cobber

Jack was an old soldier who served several tours of duty in Vietnam and if my memory is sparking correctly, he also served in Borneo during "Confrontation".

Like many others during his military service I had the great honour to serve with him... The last and final time being at the Battle School where Jack was one of the originals...

This wonderful professional soldier was well known and respected in the Regiment for both his military skills and exceptional ability to nurture and develop young warriors in the arts of soldering. When he spoke they listened; when he gave a command, they obeyed without question and no matter night, day, rain or heat, when he said "follow me" they followed. Just as importantly, be it in the field, the barracks or on leave when they needed help, they readily sought his advice which was always constructive and never with criticism or derision. Clearly with such leadership he was often considered a father by many and it is true to say that some of their sons were also fortunate enough to receive his guidance....

In my view he was one of our best and yet sadly never recognised for his outstanding service.

As would be expected of this modest and reticent warrior he has left us quietly and without complaint.

No brass bands or parades at his passing yet certainly grief and countless fond reflections of a soldier loved by all who knew him and who set the example with "Duty First"

So long cobber, sleep well.

From Amanda Baker:

Jack was a kind man to our family. He was always there for my boys and others for which he was constantly asking about, buying gifts for and treated so well when they visited him. I am extremely thankful that Jack met our new born son George this past Anzac Day.

Alex (who is 7) learnt a lot from Jack. He learnt that even people with failing health and speech can communicate well, have wonderful values and show tremendous friendship to those he cared for. Although Jack's family had passed, he had a number of other families that he treated as if they were a part of his through the love and respect he displayed to us all. Jack will be strongly missed by the Rhodes/Baker family, but we feel privileged to have known a man that was loyal, proud and strong until the day he passed.

Claude Ducker (OC C Coy 5RAR)

I knew Jack in Vietnam as a great bush soldier and as quite a character. I'm glad I saw him again last year and was most impressed with his determination to put together the quilt project for Pauline Hosie. He managed this despite all his health difficulties.

Jack Lake (CSM C Coy 5RAR)

Jack was best thought of as a "character" in his early days, it was not unusual to find someone doing "extras", and when asked why, quite often the answer started with "I was just out having a couple of drinks with Jack Bradd". Jack always seemed to be the innocent party.

My first meeting was when we (3 Pl A Coy 3 RAR) were up on operations on the Thai Malaya border in 1964.

We had a batch of reo's join us but one was missing, a Pte Bradd. He had been captured by the 'Red Caps' (Brit MP's) in Nee Soon, Singapore. We didn't see him for about another week until he was released from captivity.

He more than made up for his 'involuntary' AWOL with his skill and willingness to learn and work in the bush.

When Jack joined C Coy 5 RAR in 1969 (at his request) I was asked what sort of soldier Jack was. My answer was he was one of the best in the bush but trouble in camp. As it turned out over the years he had mellowed since our days in Malaya and Borneo. An excellent soldier - now they call them "Warriors"

Sara Nevins (Close friend and daughter of Dennis Nevins)

From Sara Nevins: I first posted on the 5 RAR website in December 2008, just curious to find any blokes my Dad (Dennis Nevins) served with. I never understood the bond between these blokes until reading the responses they all spoke highly of each other like a unbroken bond as if it was yesterday.

A few weeks after my post I receive a email from Mr. Jack Bradd

Sent: Monday, 19 January 2009 11:15 PM

"Greetings Sarah, tell your Dad that any fool can work a computer; it only took me four years and every swear word I know. I'm driving a wheelchair and a geriatric motorbike now, my legs are buggered from carrying all the bullets your Dad used to fire off in the weeds. "

Jack.

His response and sense of humour caught my eye. This was the start of our regular emailing and got to know him through our correspondence. Jack to me was caring, understanding and never judged. He gave constructive advice and always put others before himself. Through Jacks ill health he never complained. Dad told me that Jack Bradd was "the toughest soldier he had ever met". In my time of knowing Jack, this is true. For me, I was privileged to know Jack, he was a extraordinary man who became my mate.

From John (Doc) Halliday:

Another fine soldier gone to our parade ground up above. Jack will always be remembered as a great bloke, he was definitely a bit of a lad, when with us in 7 Platoon Vietnam, Jack was a very reliable & experienced NCO. all Jacks men in his section looked up to him, like most NCO's in the Battalion, Jack worked hard & played hard, but out on operations he could hold his own, with the very best, & the men in his section knew that. And to Barry Baker for looking after Jack, i commend you, also to Andy McDougall, who has been keeping all informed, & keeping 7platoon together, well done.



Jack with something out of his toy box



Jack (far left) with Harry Kallergis, Jim Reid, Andy MacDougal, Bill Ross and other diggers in the C Coy Boozery, Nui Dat



A very "tired" Jack returning to Nui Dat after 36 hours leave in Vung Tau

From a serving WO2 and son of a 5RAR Tracker who resides in Hervey Bay:

My name is AB and I knew Jack Bradd from the time I was knee high to a grass hopper. When I joined the Army, Jack became a mentor to me, and I would continually seek out his advice all the way through my military career. I met a few of the men from 7 PI that served with Jack at his funeral on Tuesday. Andy MacDougal said I should pass on the below story I told:

When I was in East Timor with 5/7 RAR in 2002/03, the trip was dry, no grog allowed. One day I received a package from Jack Bradd. Inside was a bottle of Capilano Honey. I couldn't work out why he had sent me honey. So my mates and I grabbed some bread from the mess and took it back to the dog kennels as we were dog handlers, and the kennels were in a segregated area. As I turned the bottle upside down to squeeze the honey out onto the bread, this fluid started quickly spilling out onto the bread. At first I couldn't work out what was going on, but then we quickly realised it was not honey, but Rum!!!!

It turns out Jack purchased the honey, disposed of the honey, washed the bottle out and filled it with Rum, resealed the bottle and sent it over. He would write down the package contained honey, and if it was checked all they would see was honey. So about once a month I would receive a rationing of Rum from Jack, that I would share with the other dog handlers in the kennels. We would consume it the kennels at night time, as the dogs would quickly provide early warning of anyone approaching.



Pauline Hosie proudly displayed "Jack's Quilt" – in memory of LT Ian Hosie – at Jack's funeral



An earlier photo of Jack with two of his best mates – Dennis Nevins(standing) and Barry Baker.

From Jack himself:

Jack Bradd - 1

THE PIONEER SGT, THE GUN, THE SHERIFF AND THE MEAT CLEAVER

A trellis was needed to cover the kitchen grease trap from the sight of people using the SGT Mess patio so I arrived with a Pioneer work party and started to set it up. Sheriff Sid Davis came out to

watch and as we were about to fix the first post to the kitchen wall. He volunteered to use the Ramset Gun so one of the diggers loaded it for him. We held the post while Sid lined up the Gun, he fired. There was an almighty wallop as the post split in two, bricks and mortar flew and the sound of an Irishman swearing his head off came from the kitchen. I checked the charge, maximum, uh oh, we were supposed to use minimum, but before I could say anything an angry Paddy came out of the kitchen swearing and carrying a meat cleaver. Myself and the diggers fled the scene leaving Sid, still with the Gun in his hand, to explain, if he could. I spent more time at the Rails and Moorebank pubs.

Jack Bradd - 2

GROUND PATROL

When I re-joined the Battalion in Aussie I was posted as SECTCOMD to Daphne Coy. The Battalion was slowly rebuilding and training at the individual and Section level was being conducted, I was given the task of revising diggers on the M 60. During any breaks I would sit and yarn with the diggers and soon found out that they were kicking their heels waiting to get out of the Army and had no interest in training. I fronted the CSM and OC and asked for a job where I could do something constructive so I ended up in Ground Maintenance in Admin Coy. Mat Mateer was in charge of the Hygiene Section (Turdburglers) and had the bay next to us in the Transport yard.

Our job was to cut the grass in the BN area and we were allocated 5 days to do this, we could do it in two and a half, have a bit of a bludge always managing to look like we were flat out. Zeke Mundine was DPRI SGT at the time and we'd call in for a brew, the latest news and gossip and Zeke's jokes. Zeke christened us "Ground Patrol" and the name stuck. Most of the mowers were push type but one was self-propelled with a little tractor type seat on the back, this was the prized mower. One of the diggers was a wizard on this machine and his main delight was to free wheel it from the Guard Room down the hill past BHQ around the corner at terrifying speed past the RAP into the Transport yard (I tried it once, couldn't make the corner, continued down the hill past a laughing Zeke at the DPRI store doing at least Mach 2, and ended up a tangled mess on the footy field at the bottom of the hill). One day the digger free wheeled into the Transport yard with an angry RP SGT, Taffy Cheeseman, on his heels. Taffy wanted to charge him with speeding, I told Taffy to piss off but as he out ranked me we had to stand there and take it as he bored it up us. We waited until he left then pissed ourselves laughing. Another day we were cutting around the Guard Room and one of the diggers

pointed to a bloke on the roof of the Guard Room, I called out and asked him what he was doing, he told me he was fixing the roof, fair enough. That arvo Taffy fronted us in the Transport yard wanting to know if we'd seen his prisoner, he reckoned he'd found a hole in the ceiling of the cell and the roof and no prisoner, we all shook our head no. Again we waited for Taffy to leave until we burst out laughing.

Jack Bradd - 3
THE THIEF

One of the diggers had a suspicion that we had a thief in our room so we set a trap, the bastard took the bait, we didn't want to turn him over to Taffy as he would most probably escape so we came up with a plan. We waited until the thief staggered back one night pissed as a fart, as soon as he was asleep we removed the bottom upright of the bed and rested it on the window sill, we were on the second floor of the barracks so no worries. I got my flag that I had acquired in old Saigon and laid it over the thief. Pirate, with a bottle of port in one hand, mumbled something religious from his trusty, dog-eared and battered bible as we slowly raised the bed and we 'Buried him at Sea' but as the thief slid out he took the flag with him, silly bastard. I had to go and recover the flag from the moaning thief, who amazingly wasn't hurt but it cured him of his tea leafing habits.

Future issues of our C Coy publication "Half Circle" will contain more stories of Jack Bradd – Australian soldier and larrikin. Rest in Peace old mate, your duty is done.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – donharrod@bigpond.com, 0418 423 313, with help from **and powered by the Lambs Valley Wine Company, Hunter Valley, NSW**. Sincere appreciation to Andy MacDougal and those who have contributed to Jack's memory.