

Half Circle



Number 129 - September 2017

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.

VALE – 39787 CPL Evan (Bill) EVANS. We have been advised that Bill Evans passed away on August 16th, 2017 after a long illness. We will always remember Bill as a professional soldier who served in Malaya and twice in Vietnam. Bill was a Section Commander on 5RAR's second tour of Vietnam. He was also a larrikin and one of the most likeable rogues in the Regiment. C Coy was represented by Geoff Pearson who delivered the eulogy, Peter Molloy, John Gardiner and Ian Leis at Bill's funeral on 22nd August at Caloundra Qld. We extend our sincere condolences to Sylvia and Bill's family.



Bill Evans (far left) with John Yabsley, Dartsa Davis, Peter McCarthy and Mick Dobbs, pictured under the 8PL "Snoopy" sign at our Nui Dat Base Camp, 1969.

With respect to Bill's funeral, Ian Leis has contacted your editor to express his gratitude to Geoff Pearson. Geoff was in Canberra for the AWM Last Post tribute to Bernie Smith on Friday 18th August, then flew to the Sunshine Coast to farewell his mate, Bill. Ian was taken with Geoff's sincerity in notifying his 8PL mates, the delivery of his address, as was he in supporting the family. We are all aware of some

of the things that Geoff does – his role as the Secretary of the 5RAR Association, his constant contact with his mates, organising the banner and wreath for the Sydney ANZAC Day ceremony each year, the venue for the annual ANZAC Day get-together, numerous trips to 5RAR in Darwin, etc, etc. Geoff also knows something about the placemats and labels for the wine bottles at our Canberra reunion. He is a very generous and dedicated member of C Coy. The awarding to Geoff of Life Membership of the 5RAR Association was a gesture of 5RAR’s appreciation of his efforts – all done without seeking any recognition for himself. Geoff’s wife Lyn has also been a great support. Our sincere thanks to both Geoff and Lyn.

FOUND – WO2 JOHN BARBER: Those of us who continued to serve with C Coy after Vietnam will fondly remember WO2 John Barber, who took over as CSM from Jack Lake. A few enquiries have found John at Belmont North (Newcastle) NSW. John is fit and well, remembers us, and will now join our Half Circle mailing list. Those who would like to contact John and say “G’day” can obtain his contact details from your editor.



TRAVELLING ABOUT: Bryan Schafer and Geoff Pearson (and possibly others of our group) travelled to Canberra on Vietnam Veterans’ Day (August 18th) to attend the Closing Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial. The soldier whose service was recognised was 5RAR’s Sgt Bernie Smith, KIA on his second tour of Vietnam in March 1969. Bernie’s son, Major General

Stuart Smith, is due to retire from the Army soon. Bernie Smith is also featured on the front page of the 5RAR Association website -

www.5rar.asn.au

FROM THE DIARY OF DENNIS NEVINS – 19th December 1969:

This is just a grab from my diary. It was a “nothing day” but I thought someone might get a chuckle out of it.

“Went to the B Company range this morning, I put through 600 rounds and the Gun went well, I also put some round's through the spare barrel for the first time. After the whole Company had an Intelligence lecture at the conference room, the Intelligence Officer from the Task Force gave us the latest run down on the Nogs. The lecture was very interesting. In the afternoon we received Ammo as we are Ready Reaction, we then played volleyball against CHQ and we lost, how bloody crook is that!

9 Platoon went out with the Land Clearing Team and 8 Platoon went to Hoa Long this afternoon.

Saw the movie "Green Beret" tonight - what a lot of crap”.

Ed’s Note: The reason that CHQ beat 7PL so comprehensively is that your editor was playing for CHQ that day.



AT THE RAP:

- Ian Leis** – recuperation from shoulder surgery
- Peter Molloy** - Spinal nerve treatment to alleviate pain related to the amputated leg
- Wally Magalas** - oncology treatment



HMAS Sydney (top), escorted by HMAS Derwent and HMAS Hobart, on our way to Vietnam, February 1969 (Photo by Ian Leis)

One for the Charlie Company Radio Operators and fellow Platoon Commanders

Who remembers the short-term code devised by the ‘boss’, MAJ Claude Ducker, as a means of sending rapid messages over the Company internal net instead of using the official code book?

The code was based on the phonetic alphabet from A to Z. Each letter, which was repeated for clarity, e.g. “Alpha Alpha”, was allocated a specific meaning such as a direction, terrain feature, timing and the like. The code was changed for each operation and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, took little time to learn and utilise.

A typical example of the code was:

Alpha Alpha = West	November November = Headquarters
Bravo Bravo = River/Stream	Oscar Oscar = Situation Report
Charlie Charlie = Bunker System	Papa Papa = Move/Moving
Delta Delta = Track	Quebec Quebec = Last Light
Echo Echo = North	Romeo Romeo = Hill/Mountain
Foxtrot Foxtrot = 2400 hours	Sierra Sierra = North East
Golf Golf = Tactical Harbour	Tango Tango = Location Status (LOCSTAT)

Hotel Hotel = East India India = Resupply Location Juliette Juliette = Ambush Position Kilo Kilo = Enemy Signs Lima Lima = South West Mike Mike = First Light	Uniform Uniform = North West Victor Victor = South Whiskey Whiskey = Beach X-ray X-ray = Fire Trail Yankee Yankee = Civilians Zulu Zulu = South East
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A typical short-term low security message would go something like this:

“30 this is 33, over. Am at the Bravo Bravo. No Kilo Kilo. Intend Papa Papa Uniform Uniform”

To the OC, this told him that 9 Platoon had reached the river, there were no enemy signs and that I intended to move North West.

“30 this is 33, over. Have located vacant Charlie Charlie. Recent Kilo Kilo. Intend Juliette Juliette on Delta Delta prior Quebec Quebec. Detailed Oscar Oscar and Tango Tango to follow.”

This advised the OC that 9 Platoon had come across an enemy bunker system with recent signs of activity. My intention is to set up an ambush position on the track prior to last light. A detailed situation report would be given together with the LOCSTAT (location).

As one can see, this was a very efficient means of keeping the OC advised without the radio operator having to encode the messages using the official codes issued for the operation. Of course, Situation Reports and LOCSTATs were always sent in official code.

Roger Lambert –2017

THE 5RAR ASSOCIATION – PLEASE READ THIS:

We have been advised that the 5RAR Association has suffered a fall of 40% in membership renewals for the period 2017-2020. Here are a few simple facts:

- Membership is \$50 for three years. That’s 30 cents per week;
- 40% of our members have failed to renew for the current term;
- We have an Association that is envied by the rest of the Regiment;
- We maintain our bond with each other as we served so closely together;
- We maintain contact with the widows and families of those who have passed away – on active service or in later years;
- We communicate with each other;
- We assist in maintaining memorials to our fallen mates;
- Our Committee and Webmaster Ted Harrison work voluntarily and tirelessly to administer our Association and maintain our Battalion history;
- We are 5RAR.

Here’s what to do:

- Contact the memberships Officer (Gary Townsend) using the renewal form that is always included with Tiger Tales, or by email at garyt.5rar@gmail.com
- Arrange your renewal, or sit on your hands and let our Association fade away.

Thank you,

Don Harrod

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS: John (Doc) Halliday has a new email address - jmhalliday3@yahoo.com (the first letter is a "j")

The digger went to the RAP, and reported to the Regimental Medical Officer (RMO) that he felt unwell. The RMO examined him thoroughly for over 20 minutes, and said "I'm sorry, but I can't find anything wrong with you. It must be the beer".

The digger replied, "OK Doc, no problem, I'll come back when you're sober".



Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – donharrod@bigpond.com, 0418 423 313, with help from Ian Leis, Peter Molloy, Geoff Pearson, Roger Lambert, Bryan Schafer, Dennis Nevins, Doug Bishop (C Coy 1st tour), behind-the-scenes assistance from Gary Townsend and Ted Harrison from the 5RAR Association, **and powered by the Lambs Valley Wine Company, Hunter Valley, NSW.**