

# Half Circle



Number 100 - April 2015

**(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 (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.

As this is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the landing of Australian troops at Gallipoli in April 1915 - the event that shaped our Nation, it is only fitting that we pen a few words to demonstrate our sincere thanks to those soldiers, who gave their utmost and in many cases paid the supreme sacrifice. We still think that we are relatively young, but in reality, we were born somewhere around only thirty years after Gallipoli. Below are the thoughts of some of our members:

They took the oath to serve the youngest country of the 20th Century; some for adventure, some for patriotism but all proved to be excellent soldiers. They treated all enemy the same; with all the ferocity available to man and won.  
*Warren (Jack) Bradd, OAM*

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I can not believe what these men did - they charged and died for everyone, there was no where else to go but into the machine guns of the Foe. What a waste. Lest We Forget. I will never. *Max Cameron*

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A bugle call heard by every Mother's son.  
Young men, brave, transcending at a Gallipoli dawn.  
A nations pride and ANZAC legend born. *Jim Lowry.*

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The Australian Soldier, of any era, represents the best of us. The mate: looking after his friends, the scoundrel: getting the job done despite it all, the warrior fighting 'not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.' *LTCOL David French (courtesy G.K. Chesterton)*

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Whenever Anzacs are mentioned I think of my father and his two brothers who all served in WW1. My father George Wilkins, was in the 2nd Tunnelling Coy and served the whole war on the Western Front despite being severely gassed. My Uncle Phil was as a stretcher-bearer at Gallipoli but was then killed in action in France serving with 3rd Battalion. My Uncle Tom served in France with 1 Field Engineers Coy. He suffered shell shock and was repatriated in 1917. To me, heroes three. *David Wilkins.*

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We lay quiet at the bottom of the boat, as we neared the cliffs.

As the bottom scraped the shore we leapt out with yells of bravado and fear,  
The bloke behind me didn't stop; just fell into the water.

My boots strained for grip to cross the sand,  
I fell into the cliff face, safe, safe for now. *Peter Knight.*

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I had three relatives that who served in France in the First World War. My grandfather Raymond 58 BN, his brother Neville 22 BN (killed in action at Bullecourt 3/5/1917) and my Maternal grand Uncle Alexander Tressidder 8BN (killed in action France 5/11/1916) all enlisted in 1915 (Ray would have been under age), so they all would have had years in that hell. I am in awe of them, and I don't know how they endured for so long. *Don Teichelman*

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There are no words that can explain my feelings. The ANZACs set the benchmark for Australian servicemen, and I hope that my contribution has helped to maintain what Australia is all about. Before I get too emotional, I have only two words for our ANZACs – Thank You. *Dennis Nevins*

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I acknowledge that in 1915 "Aussies" male and female answered the call. They set out to protect and keep the enemy from our shores. Sacrifice - courage- determination and bravery began and ensured the Australian way of life. The freedom we enjoy. The Anzacs are part of our heritage. Future generations should ensure their legend is never forgotten. *Ian Leis*

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I have read countless articles about our forefathers and their efforts and achievements in WWI. I have particularly read on the deeds of Billy Sing, a Chinese, who adopted and served Australia. I cannot express my feelings of pride. *Tony Samuel*

My Grandfather, Joseph Mead, though shot through both thighs, survived the War, but his brother-in-law Edward John Trotman, a Corporal in the 41st Bn A.I.F was killed in action on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1918 aged 23; How many days and a wakie short was that! My dad was christened Edward John Trotman Mead. I was the first of my family to visit my great uncle's grave. We owe them all so much. *Dave Mead*

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War is a testament to mankind's stupidity.  
The benefits to the economy are debatable.  
The strength of the bonds created are indisputable.  
The cost to future generations are beyond calculation.  
Greater good would be the outcome if the effort were directed toward peace.  
*Greg Dick*

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Major J.J.A. Walker, 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, AIF. WIA Gallipoli. He was A/CO when the Battalion helped to stop a major German offensive in the spring of 1918. In a letter home to his wife, Jack advised that he had put up five members for bravery awards and "got the lot". One of those was the award of the Victoria Cross to Lieutenant Percy Storkey for his actions during the fighting around Hangard Wood on 7 April 1918. Lest We Forget. *Roger Lambert*

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To me, the first stanza of Laurence Binyon's poem, For the Fallen, is poignant:

"They went with songs to the battle, they were young.  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe."

They departed their homeland on what was, for many, a great adventure, not knowing what lay ahead. They served with honour, courage and devotion and for too many, their final resting place is marked by a white tombstone -

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row, ....." *Bill Tittley*

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Young men from fledgling Australia stormed the shores of a strange land, meeting impossible odds. They fought, suffered and died to defend our Country. We can never fully express our gratitude. *Don Harrod*

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It is because of the most heroic and unselfish deeds of our ANZACs that we inherited the esprit de corps to follow in their footsteps with our efforts in Vietnam. We honour them. *Bryan Schafer.*

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'I, as a returned soldier and a proud member of 5 RAR, together with our Nation have to admire the brave young men who showed tenacity and a willingness to fight for what they believed in. Many paid the ultimate sacrifice under extreme conditions. Their courage and bravery gave us hope for prosperity and peace and a better life for future generations to follow. I will always honour and respect the spirit and dedication given by the ANZACS a century ago.' *Don Frohmuller*

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I believe that my family is extremely fortunate to have many Anzac heroes. My father, Alfred Hamlin, served in Egypt during WWII. My father in law Donald Matheson together with his brother in law Frank Cassilles served in New Guinea during the Second World War. As well as these great Army soldiers my wife's Grandfather, David Hume, sailed with the Maritime Service through war torn territory to ensure the troops were well equipped. These are the men I aspire to as a foot slogger who served in Vietnam. I hope I did them proud.  
*Eric Hamlin.*

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Anzac Day to me means Mateship, Courage, Sacrifice, Patriotism, Tenacity & Pride! How honoured are we to belong to a country with such an amazing Spirit! *Ben Oram*

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When the Gallipoli campaign was contemplated there was concern that experienced British troops would be diverted from France. Lord Kitchener put the planner's minds at rest with "only a cruise in the Sea of Marmara" was intended and that Australian troops, then training in Egypt, could do this task. He was underestimating the Turks and belittling the Australians. As it turned out the Turks were a stubborn foe and our ANZACS fought with great gallantry under very difficult conditions. From then on they proudly regarded themselves as Australians rather than "Sandgropers", "Gumsuckers" etc. Thus the Gallipoli campaign gave a strong impetus to the forging of the Australian identity. *Claude Ducker*

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#### **AT THE RAP:**

**Barrie Taylor** - still battling ongoing oncology issues, but also planning his hundredth birthday in 2047.

**Barry Baker** - medical issues. Still as cranky as ever, and looking for a Government agency which can issue him with a Birth Certificate with more appropriate dates recorded on it.

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#### **A word from Claude ducker re our upcoming reunion:**

In early April, the details of the C Company reunion, Second Tour in Vietnam, will be sent out to all members for whom we have contact details. The matter is only awaiting the establishment of a reunion bank account providing us with a direct debit facility for your registration and payment to attend the reunion.

On indications so far we are likely to have over 90 attending and that we will have a memorable Reunion. With my best regards, Claude Ducker



**TRAVELLING ABOUT:** **Ian and Glenys Leis** have left their Qld home for a trip around Australia, or at the very least, whichever way the wind blows. They expect to be away for about nine months. On 17<sup>th</sup> March they travelled through Coonabarabran NSW and caught up with you editor and his wife. The last time Ian and Don met was about twenty years ago.

**Blue and Arleen Schafer** have also left home. Well, at least for two months on a long-awaited trip. Enjoy it!

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**As this edition is the 100<sup>th</sup> of Half Circle**, I would like to thank all those who have contributed in making this possible (eg. David Wilkins with “Dave’s Diary”). Half Circle started almost nine years ago, and today still stumbles along. It is simple in its format (please see the header on page 1). It is up to us to preserve our page in history – I hope Half Circle will kick on for a long time yet.

Below are letters from Phil Greenhalgh and David Wilkins. These are published with great humility. Please read your editor’s comments on the covering email to this edition *Don*

*“Whilst our embattled editor/compiler of Half Circle is calling for short reminiscences of the meaning and relevance of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gallipoli from C Company members, I believe it is as relevant (if not more so, to surviving Charlie Coy members and their families), to consider and remember that this is the **100<sup>th</sup> edition** of a wonderful publication with the aim of bringing together those members.*

*Don Harrod, during recent discussion, said, that the whole concept of Half Circle was that we needed a forum to communicate with each other. We have a special bond that can be neither explained nor broken. Half Circle belongs to all C Coy members. Don volunteered to do something about our lack of communication almost nine years ago and today it is still happening.*

*Half Circle has on many occasions both delighted and saddened this reader. The editors’ choice of humour is appreciated as much as his thankless task in informing all members of the passing of Platoon members, the reminiscences of those members, as well as the compilation of memories from many of the C Company members.*

*C Company members are extremely fortunate to have amongst us, a person willing to keep communication between Company members flowing in an insightful and informative manner. I, for one, am extremely grateful to Don, I congratulate him on achieving 100 issues, I understand it ain’t easy but keep the good words coming. Thanks Don*

*Best regards*

*Phil Greenhalgh “*

Dear readers of Half Circle,

It is with great pleasure that I write in this 100th edition of Half Circle to congratulate our editor, Don Harrod, alias Dan Horrid, alias Pirate, alias the C Company corporal clerk in Vietnam, for his outstanding efforts in producing our monthly newsletter. Pirate's energy and enthusiasm with Half Circle have not only kept us informed and amused but also assisted the Mushroom Mob of C Company to stay in touch, and by spreading the word, to help track down many of our "lost" members. It is this maintaining contact with our former mates that has led C Company to have had arguably the largest Company turnout at the recent 2015 Battalion reunion.

As I had previously served in BHQ, D Company and B Company before joining C Company in October 1969, I visited all those sub-unit gatherings at the 2015 Battalion reunion and I can say categorically that C Company had the largest and rowdiest mob there. In no small measure has Pirate been responsible for this with his networking efforts to help pull us together again after so many years apart since our Vietnam days.

Don Harrod, on behalf of all former members of C Company, please accept our congratulations on Half Circle reaching the ton, and thank you from us all for your terrific efforts. We appreciate them greatly and hope you will continue towards Half Circle reaching its double ton.

And in saying this gentlemen, I remind you all to please provide Pirate with material for him to include in future editions of Half Circle. It can be an old photo, a memory from your time in Vietnam (not always accurate these days), a note and photo about what you are doing now, maybe about a return visit to Nui Dat, a chance meeting with an old C Coy Digger mate, your feelings at a reunion or an Anzac Day march and so on.

And to other readers of Half Circle who are not C Company vets (such as family and friends) you are also most welcome to contribute your observations and thoughts. We are one large family now. We are bonded together after being brother-in-arms with a common experience and so we are all interested in how each of us is faring today.

So please share you thoughts and help Pirate keep Half Circle going.

Warm regards to all,

Dave Wilkins

Captain

2ic C Company (October - December 1969)

OC (December 69 - March 1970)

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**FROM THE 5RAR REUNION:** Your editor has been contacted by a number of those who attended the reunion. They all commended the organizers for their flawless planning, and were so proud to be a part of the 5RAR family. Bill Titley, Dave Wilkins and Jack Lake were very taken with the welcome and acceptance afforded them by every digger from our group. Congratulations gents, and thank you. Claude Ducker has also expressed his regret that he could not attend.

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**FOUND – Gary Strickland (Stricko) – 9PL.** Claude Ducker has been contacted by Gary, who has just moved from Adelaide to Brisbane. Gary can be contacted at [ggcs@outlook.com](mailto:ggcs@outlook.com) and expects his old mates to contact him. You have been told!

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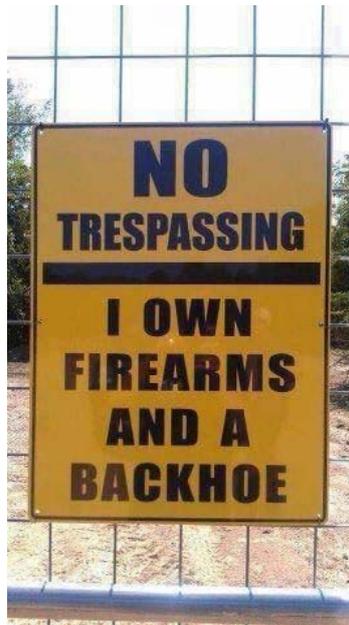


**In Sydney and want to hit the little white ball?** Then head for the Georges River Golf Course, Henry Lawson Drive Georges Hall. Geoff Grimish and his team will make you most welcome. Geoff is a Vietnam vet (RAA), and is a great supporter of this newsletter. Phone (02) 9724 1615.

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The bride was escorted down the aisle and when she reached the altar, the groom was standing there with his golf bag and clubs at his side. She said: "What are your golf clubs doing here?" He looked her right in the eye and said, "This isn't going to take long is it?"

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Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – [donharrod@bigpond.com](mailto:donharrod@bigpond.com), 0418 423 313, (02) 6842 4913, with help from C Coy members with ANZAC messages, Kevin Mulligan, Phil Greenhalgh, and Dave Wilkins.