

Half Circle



Number 67 - July 2012

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

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.



**2789638
Private
Euston Shane
SWAN**

**19th August 1947
To
13th June 2012**



VALE - 2789638 PTE EUSTON SHANE SWAN (SWANNY):

Members would be aware that Swanny passed away suddenly on 13th June 2012, just short of his 65th birthday. This sad news has made us remember him - a stocky, quiet, totally dependable hard-working soldier, who was meticulous in whatever he did. His equipment, especially his M60 GPMG gun was without doubt the best maintained weapon anywhere. He was probably the only one of our whole group who didn't get into trouble at some stage. Swanny came from the land, and was working in Werris Creek (NSW) when he was called up for National Service. After his two years in the Army, he returned to the north-west/New England area of NSW, and back to farming. During these years he married Sharon, and they had four children, and subsequently their grandchildren. The drought of the 1980's took its toll, and Euston and Sharon moved to the NSW Central Coast, where they purchased a milk run. Swanny worked at that business until around 2010, when he semi-retired. Full retirement followed when knee reconstructions became necessary. Euston Swan would have been the type of digger any

commander would have wanted, due to the above mentioned qualities. He was also the type of person that we wanted - and had - as a lifetime friend. Our sincere sympathies to Sharon and the family. *Rest in Peace Swanny, you can now stand down.*

Ed's note: Swanny was farewelled on 2nd June. Fourteen of his mates - approximately 40% of 9PI soldiers and their spouses attended. David Wilkins delivered a tribute on behalf of Swanny's military colleagues - a very moving and sad occasion. We offer Sharon and her family our full support.

2012 QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS:

As we would all now know, Barry Morgan, our C Coy Int Rep in Vietnam 1969, was awarded the OAM on 11th June 2012. Barry served most of our Vietnam tour unscathed, but was shot and seriously wounded in December 1969. His severe wounds saw him medevaced back to Australia, his wounds such that he was then unable to continue his infantry career. He joined the Ordnance Corps and entered the administrative stream. He was later transferred to Medical Corps, and was involved in the formulation of policy, and was commissioned. Barry retired as a LT COL after 30+ years of service, including a period as the CO of the Army School of Health. Aside from his wounds, Barry has had personal medical issues to face, all with his usual fighting spirit, was injured in a serious car accident, and still met all these adversities with a smile. His work for the 5RAR Association, the RAR Association, his work for Korea veterans and the commemoration of the Battle of Binh Ba never waned. Barry is most deserving of his award, and we all congratulate him. We also acknowledge the work and support of his wife Kathleen, who has constantly been by Barry's side.

I am also honoured to advise that I have heard from MAJ David French, Commander of C Coy 5RAR (Combat Team Charlie - MTF 2) Afghanistan 2010. Dave has advised that the following personnel have been recognised for their service as follows:

CAPT Scott Stort - DSM

CPL Marc Danielletto - Commendation for distinguished service.

CPL Ryan Avery - Medal of Gallantry

BDR David Robertson - Medal of Gallantry

We congratulate these personnel on their exceptional service. The Tiger is alive and well. Its AO is not one to be messed around with!

DOES ANYONE KNOW the whereabouts or email address of John (Tangles) Gardiner? Emails to him keep bouncing back. Please let your editor know if you can help.

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:

10 Jan 1970

Whilst moving south towards a large open kunai grass area from where we were to be extracted by chopper, 9 Platoon discovered a cache containing weapons and grenades including an AK47 and five Chicom grenades.

11 Jan

We were extracted by choppers just before noon and returned to Nui Dat for a 2-day break.

During these two days I was briefed on the next phase of the operation which was to be in the monolithic and threatening Mây Tào Mountains, a traditional and fairly remote enemy base area and stronghold of HQ 5 VC Division. What we referred to as the Mây Tào Mountains in fact consisted of Nui Mây Tào, a steep circular mountain over 2,200 feet high and the even larger mass of Nui Bé which was a bit short of 3,000 feet high. Like a steep-sided island in the valley separating these two was a smaller feature, Nui Tà Lôm, about 1,000 feet high. 6 RAR had been right through this Nui Mây Tào mountain complex during Operation Marsden the previous month, combing the slopes and caves and finally planting the Australian flag on the mountain peak. A recent SAS patrol had however, reported major enemy movement in the area and we were to find and close with that enemy.

14 Jan

After the break the Coy was redeployed to FSPB Tiger just south of the Long Khanh Province border and about 7 clicks west of the Nui Mây Tào Mountains. From the Fire Support Base we did a hot insertion into the southern foothills of the Nui Mây Tào Mountains. To the north of our LZ on the mountain peaks was the three-way junction of Phuoc Tuy, Long Khanh and Binh Tuy Province borders.

Our "hot insertion" was done by, firstly, softening up the surrounds to the landing zone with rockets from F4 Phantom bombers and mini guns and rockets from Bushranger light fire teams, and, secondly having the slicks of Albatross choppers, laden with our troops, swoop down to the LZ, an open patch of grass surrounded by dense jungle. The diggers jumped from the choppers when the skids momentarily touched down, and then sprinted to designated areas of cover. Actually it was considerably slower than a "sprint" as each man was heavily burdened with his kit full of ammunition, grenades, rations and water. The air support remained with us during this landing phase in case we needed it to fire on any enemy causing us strife. This time there was no enemy reception committee.

CHQ with 9 Platoon moved to an ambush position about a click closer to the mountain whilst 7 and 8 Platoons went a bit further into separate overnight positions.

(To be continued)



Slicks of troop-carrying Albatross choppers heading for an LZ.

IAN LEIS CONTINUES HIS PROFILES ON 8PL MEMBERS – THIS ISSUE – BILL EVANS

A short insight into 38797 Corporal/Sergeant "Bill" Evan Evans.

Very few will have known Evan Evans. He was known as Bill Evans to us. Before joining the army at 18 years of age for a 3 year engagement, Bill worked as a telegram delivery boy. On completion of his first three years in the military, Bill again found employment in the PMG (Post Master Generals) Department. Working alongside his father as a linesman, truck driver and doing general maintenance.

Bill has always been a quiet achiever and private person. Not one to blow his own trumpet. However, those who have served with him and under him as a section commander have a

huge respect for him. Not just as a military leader but as a friend - someone who cared and was supportive of those around him. His way of life, his caring nature and respect for others continues today, he enjoys his privacy and a quiet life.

In his late 20's Bill again joined the military - another three years and then six years leading to a career of 20+ years serving his country. Two tours of Vietnam, a stint in Malaya and time as an Infantry instructor at Ingleburn and Puckapunyal. Bill relates to his allocation to 5RAR as the most rewarding period in the military. However, Bill's personal life suffered during his military and civilian life. A few failed marriages - isolation and time away from family has caused problems for him. He has three sons and nine grandchildren he enjoys limited contact with them.

Post his military career Bill found employment in the trucking industry - long distance driving trucks and also buses. Once again isolation and time away caused problems in his personal life.

This small insight into Evan "Bill" Evans life does not do justice to what he has achieved. On talking with him before writing this story I found him very reserved - as stated "another quiet achiever" within our midst. He has very little in the way of mementos - photos of his 20+ years in the military or continuing on in civilian life. These have been lost during upsets in his personal life.

This year on Anzac Day he marched with the assistance of Peter Molloy (No10). It was the first time Bill wore his father's medals next to his own. A very proud moment – a long time coming for him.

Today Billy enjoys the quiet life. Sylvia his wife is very supportive and caring. Health problems for him have seen a reduction in activities. He is no longer able to enjoy a game of lawn bowls, a social and physical activity he enjoyed. Regrets are few. He appreciates what he has and works hard to improve his health. Bill would enjoy contact or a visit from anyone passing through or able to do so. Peter Molly (No10) visits Bill at least once or twice a week and they enjoy an outing together for coffee or lunch. (He aint heavy - he's my brother)

Billy Evans, thank you for your service to your country, you truly are a part of the proud military family that exists today. Those of Charlie Company 5RAR 1969 who were privileged to serve next to you, hold you and your friendship in high esteem.



Bill Evans (l) with John Yabsley, Neal (Dartza) Davis, Peter (Fred) McCarthy and Mick Dobbs (sitting) under the 8PL "Snoopy" sign, Vietnam 1969.

LOOKING FOR: Any information on SSGT Mouse McLeod, our first CQMS. Mouse left Vietnam during our tour, and was replaced by Eddie O'Reilly. Where did Mouse go? If anyone can shed any light on his whereabouts, please contact your editor.

SOME THOUGHTS:

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

The shin bone is a device on the body designed to find furniture in the dark.

Change is inevitable – except from a vending machine.



1201670 Pte BJ Oram.

This picture of Ben, aged 19, is typical of the Aussie digger in Vietnam, 1969. Wet, tired, ever alert, and the sort of bloke who would do it all again.



Another photo from ANZAC Day 2012. This photo, taken in Brisbane, shows Cpls Stuart Eckart and Mathew Reeves holding the banner, with the grandchildren of the late Chuck Stamp marching in his honour. Their T shirts depicting the words "I'm proud. My Grandpa's a Vietnam veteran". Chuck's daughter Rachael marched behind the banner.

AT THE RAP:

Colin Summerfield is currently a guest of the Tamworth Base hospital, having surgery to plate both bones in his leg. Col had a fall some weeks ago, and snapped his left leg. He will be in hospital for some time yet – a phone call to Colin would be appreciated – (02) 6767 7700, Ward 1.

IN THE NEXT EDITION OF HALF CIRCLE:

1. Eddie Moon shoes a water buffalo.
2. Jack Bradd remembers a R&C break.
3. How to home brew Ba-Moi-Ba.
4. CSM Jack Lake still works on the list of blokes he really liked.
5. Colin Summerfield buys a book on playing hop-scotch.

Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – donharrod@bigpond.com
(02) 6842 4913, 0418 423 313, with help from Dave Wilkins, Ian Leis, Pat Oram, Claude Ducker, David French, Gary Townsend, Susan Lake, Phil Greenhalgh, and the men of 9PL.