

Half Circle



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(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.

THIS HALF CIRCLE IS A SPECIAL EDITION. Major David French, OC of C Coy 5RAR, based in Darwin, and training with his warriors for overseas operations, has rallied his troops to provide articles to demonstrate to us what the 2010 5RAR Tigers are doing.

We had our shot at serving Australia, and came out with a brilliant record – never defeated in battle, with weaponry that wouldn't even rate compared with today, second-rate equipment (some left over from the Second World War, some American), communications with our families that didn't even exist, no telephone service back to Australia, no internet, no TV, limited commercial radio, being black-banned by postal workers and wharfies who refused to get our mail or parcels from our Mums to Vietnam, but WE MADE IT!

Below are some articles provided by current-day C Coy 5RAR Tigers. These blokes are to be congratulated for taking the time to remember and respect their mentors. Dave French must also be thanked for his efforts in educating his diggers to the conditions the original Tigers endured in serving Australia.

Charlie Company - The lead up to Afghanistan PTE Pugh and PTE Edwards:

It's the beginning of February and we are all back at work after a long well needed Christmas stand down. We are attending the once yearly mandatory brief; it's Major French's (OC C COY) turn and as the normal yearly brief goes he states "Its going to be very busy this year men".

The year kicked off into full swing with a 1-week urban package at the Urban Facility. The focus was on rapid aim fire, room entries/clearances, hallway and stairway drills concentrating on individual, pairs and progressing as the week went onto section strength with a test of objectives being a full section assault on the urban facility.

The next week of training was spent at the range with everyone firing the AIRN Shoot and LF6 to be compliant for deployment. Though it wasn't all about the guys with the Steyrs, the gunners got to go up and strut their stuff with their guns (Just for the practice). During the night however was a different story as everyone got up and continued on with the night shoot this was conducted with Steyrs fitted with Night Aiming devices and Night weapon sights and Minimi's with Night weapon sights. On the last day off range week the best shots from the week were given the opportunity to shoot for their Cross Rifles. Even though no one passed the week was a success, with everybody's shooting improving greatly.

The Company Military Skills Comp on the 15th April was undertaken through Robertson Barracks. The competition consisted of various stands and was conducted in full marching order with emphasis on teamwork at the section level. The first stands consisted of Mil Floatation and then a First aid stand where a member was struck by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). The Casualty then had to be Stretcher carried out to an RV which was the next stand where a member had to set up a Radio and send a Casevac Report all within the golden hour. From there it was a stomp with a navigation ex to the range where a group and zero was conducted all scored with the smaller the grouping the more points towards your sections score.

At the company level we have also introduced weekly pack marches with increasing weight and distance. This has been done as when the soldier is overseas, not only will his webbing, rifle and at times pack be used, but first line ammunition will be carried, body armor will be worn and section weapons such as the 66mm and claymores will also be carried, increasing the weight that most soldiers would be used to carrying on exercise.

The company has also been focusing on basic marksmanship and instinctive shooting. We conducted some of this training at "kangaroo flats". The company arrived at k flats on the Monday and when all men were accounted for, it was straight into shooting. There were several different stands that were rotated through in platoon lots. The ranges provided were a sneaker, CQST, gallery and snap range with a friendly target thrown in just to mix the scenario up. All ranges greatly helped the soldiers increase their instinctive shooting. As the coy left on the Thursday morning, each soldier had participated on each range and realised that the enemy where not going to make it easy to bring them down.

Since first getting information of being sent to Afghanistan, there has been a major focus of the company on SOP development, and that all soldiers are ready to step up to the position above them in a worst case scenario. This being said action has been taken by giving more responsibility throughout sections, and briefing on such things as giving orders and basic soldiering.

In preparation for Afghanistan some of the courses run this year included the Junior Leadership Course, SIOS, Bushmaster Drivers/Crew Commanders, Combat First Aiders, Snipers, and Basic Mortars. With all the training and these courses that are being carried out, the company will be 'fit to fight' coming into the later part of this year and looking further to the upcoming deployment.

ANZAC DAY 2010 - PTE D.T Hayes

It's April 25 and it is the 95th Anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli. It is a time for remembrance of an event which helped forge the identity of a newly formed nation through the sacrifice of its young men and women and all those service men and women who followed in their footsteps.

ANZAC Day is a tradition in my family. I have been attending Dawn Service with my family and grandfather Harold Wallis - who is a returned serviceman of the Royal Australian Navy - since I was 5 years of age. This is a day we share with my grandfather I have not been able to share this day with my grandfather or family since I joined the Army in 2007 - a decision which was influenced a great deal by my grandfather and my passion for military history. The morning of the 25th family and friends gather at my parent's house in Gowrie, ACT in the early hours of the morning, where we then attend Dawn Service at the Australian War Memorial. There were 19 of us in attendance.

Dawn Service in Canberra is held on the parade ground of the Australian War Memorial which is situated at the bottom of the steps in front of the Memorial. This years Dawn Service was one of my proudest, as I could stand next to my grandfather as a returned service man. I have seen Dawn service grow from several hundred people to over twenty thousand in attendance this year. As always Dawn Service starts with the screeching of Cockatoos and a cold chill in the air. The service is one which makes anyone proud to be an Australian and more so a member of the Australian Defence Force. The most moving part of the Dawn Service is the reading of the ode and playing of the Last Post. The bugler stands on the walkway between the two pillars of the War Memorial, with low light creating a silhouette of the digger as he plays the Last Post and Reveille. There is an eerie mood created which is only broken by the sounds of Kookaburras and Cockatoos singing their songs as the morning light breaks. With a final hymn and the National Anthem the ceremony comes to an end. After Dawn Service we made our way to the "Shell Shock Club" - the Returned Services Club at Manuka - as we do every year and catch up with friends over several beers and many a story told by veterans of different conflicts. Once my mother says its time, we head back to my parents place where they put on breakfast for everyone.

The rest of ANZAC day is spent supporting my grandfather, a few drinks at the local club and of course keeping with tradition playing two up. My grandfather comes from a strong military background; his two brothers served in the Defence Force one in the Air Force the other in the Army both during WWII. My great grandfather was in the Army, Royal Australian Engineers for 38 years. He also has a son in the Navy and

several grandchildren in the Defence Force apart from me; my brother is also in the Navy. - I was the only smart one joining the Army.

My great grandfather, William Vivian, joined the Army in 1913 and was discharged at the age of 60 in 1951. William was involved in the first shot of anger in the First World War on Australian Soil. Harold first joined the Air Force by lying about his age and when his father found out he was promptly discharged. He then joined the Army under a different name while his father was away, completed his training and was attached to 2/26 Battalion and sent to New Guinea. His real age and name were discovered and he was sent to Royal Park for discharge. He joined the Navy as the age limit was lower.

During his initial training as a chief, his Army training was discovered and he was posted to No 4 Naval Beach Commando Unit. When that was disbanded he was moved to SDS (Special Duty Services). Harold served in many campaigns and counties during both war time and peace and in various roles receiving 26 medals. Some of the areas he served were:

- Hiroshima
- Mine sweeping
- Mop up end of WW2
- China - US Battalion
- 21 Squadron
- War Crimes Commission
- R N Commandos
- Atomic/Germ Warfare
- Korea
- Borneo - Special Forces
- Malaysia - Special Forces
- Patrolled Sunda Strait
- Subic Bay to Alaska
- Vietnam - American Special Forces

Attending Dawn Service this year with my grandfather is an experience that I will not forget. As a current serving member I have a greater appreciation for the many stories my grandfather has told me and will endeavour to keep his history alive.

The Hayes family tradition of attending Dawn Service and paying our respects to the many members of the Australian Defence Force both current and previous, is a tradition which will be up held for many years to come. My family and I are extremely proud of our family's military history, the ANZAC Sprit and what it stands for.

Medals - Harold Wallis

Meritorious Medal
Naval Special O-P - Mine Clearance
Australian Defence Medal 1945
Australian Service Medal 1945
Australian Defence Medal O-C
B.E.C.O.F. - Japan
United Nations Medal - Korea
Korea Service Medal
American Japan O-P
Malay - Borneo Service Medal
Pingat-Jass - Malaysia Medal
Naval Special Service Medal - Bars Malaysia, Borneo (another one on main medal)
Australian Service Medal 1945-1975 - Bars P.N.G., Japan, F.E.S.R.
Australian Active Service Medal 1945-1975 - Bars Korea, Vietnam, Malay
Vietnam Star
USA Vietnam 1960 Special Operations
Australian Vietnam Service Medal 1960
Republic of Vietnam Service Medal
Australian Pacific Campaign
American Campaign - Asia - Pacific
Naval Long Service Medal
Australian Defence Medal
Korean War Medal 1950-1956
United States Navy for Service - Occupation Service
Asiatic Pacific Campaign - United States of America
Liberty - For the liberation of Philippines

5 RAR celebrates ANZAC DAY - PTE Braden Jay ROWE

On the 25th April 2010 soldiers of the Fifth Battalion gathered to pay tribute to those who had served and fallen for our country. Soldiers and family listened solemnly as stories emphasising the ANZAC spirit were told. This was the first ANZAC day for many of the soldiers and it couldn't have been more relevant as many of them prepare to deploy. As many reflected on the sacrifices they and their families may soon be required to make, respects were paid to the soldiers who had bravely served our country in previous wars. All those present stood silently as wreaths were placed down in the ANZAC memory.

At the completion of the ceremony soldiers of Charlie Company gathered in ceremonial dress for the march through Darwin city. Soldiers from the Army, Navy and the Air Force all formed up proudly in preparation for the march. The police along with other community organisation were also invited to attend. The crowd cheered as all members of the parade marched before them. At the conclusion of the march an exhilarated Charlie Company went back to the battalion 'boozers'.

New soldiers gathered with former veterans to share stories and drinks as well as play traditional Australian games such as two-up. Family and friends remained at the battalion 'boozer' for hours to celebrate and commemorate the spirit of the ANZACs.

***Editor's Note:** "half Circle" was born after one of it's diggers from the Vietnam days, sitting down one night after a few beverages thought "We are not communicating. We all served in Vietnam under appalling conditions, came home to Australia, received no support or any kind of debrief, were considered to be outcasts and baby killers, were shunned, and our Country and some ex-service organisations did not want to know us". This bloke said "Bugger it, it's time that we found each other again" HALF Circle was born. The name came from the shape of the letter "C", which represented a half circle. The concept is very simple – we communicate by electronic means – we are scattered throughout Australia and overseas, and in many instances we don't even know where the other bloke lives. It doesn't matter. Half Circle is designed for us to remember, re-live old times, leave what happened in the bush in the bush, have a good laugh at ourselves, and maintain our cameraderie. An old 5RAR Tiger died a few weeks ago. His funeral was held in a remote area of NSW. Seventeen of his mates attended – one from the Phillipines, one from Perth, one from Victoria, five from Queensland and the rest from various parts of NSW. I met up with three blokes I had not seen for over 40 years. 40 years? – more like 40 days. Our conversations just picked up from where we left off.*

***HERE IS THE CHALLENGE TO C Company 5RAR (2010):** How about starting a newsletter for you, your families, your forbears, and start recording Australia's current history. I don't care if you pinch my articles, pinch the Half Circle name (you'll have to change it a bit), but PLEASE don't let go the finest tradition in the Royal Australian Regiment – C Coy 5RAR.*

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