

Half Circle



Number 90, June 2014



AT THE RAP: Barrie Taylor – oncology treatment
Wally Magalas – oncology treatment

We know that some of us may do it a bit tough at times, with medical conditions that they do not wish to disclose to all of C Coy. This is to let you know that we are all one group, and whoever may be suffering is not suffering alone. **Ed.**

THE PROPOSED C COMPANY 5RAR (VIETNAM, 2nd tour) REUNION

Reproduced below is a letter from Claude Ducker, outlining the proposal to hold a C Coy (2nd tour) reunion in Canberra in March 2016. A copy has been sent to every (known) C Coy digger. If for any reason you may have missed it, please read on..... **then reply to Claude, even if you have already indicated “YES” on our first survey.**

Your reply is not indicating a commitment that you must attend – it is simply to establish numbers so that detailed planning can commence. It seems that most who have already responded are in favour of a three-day reunion, and there is an almost unanimous “YES” to the boat trip and luncheon. If you have not yet responded, please assist us by doing so. Thanks. Claude’s letter is reprinted hereunder:

“Dear former C Company Colleague and Next of Kin,

Warmest Greetings!

There have been quite a few suggestions that we should have a C Company Reunion in Canberra. The idea has received strong support in a recent quick email survey conducted by Don Harrod although no specific dates were proposed. Such a reunion would of course include our wives and partners who have been of such great support over the years. The next-of-kin of members of C Company who died in Vietnam or since then who would like to catch up with old friends would also be very welcome.

Barry Morgan and I, who both live in Canberra, are happy to organize this reunion with the help of our wives. We have already been involved with previous 5 RAR reunions in Canberra and this proposed Company reunion will be a smaller, more

intimate affair. We are co-opting the help of Platoon representatives from time to time who may also contact you when we are further along with our planning.

Our former Commanding Officer, Brigadier Khan, also lives in Canberra and I have arranged with him to speak at our final dinner. I must say he seemed delighted with the prospect.

This letter is mainly to say that we are going ahead with the proposal, and to check with you as to the suitability of the proposed dates and your preference as to the duration of the reunion.

One of the restrictions in the choice of dates is the fact 5 RAR has already organised a reunion from 26 February to 1 March 2015. There has always been a tacit agreement that company reunions would not take place within a year of a battalion reunion. Obviously there are limitations on what members can afford in travel and accommodation expenses if reunions are too close together. It therefore looks like 2016 is the year for our C Company reunion and the suggested dates are Tuesday 15th March to Thursday 17th March 2016. (Good Friday 2016 is 25th March).

Although good weather can never be guaranteed at any particular time, the weather in Canberra in early autumn is generally considered to be the best in the year.

Your committee considered the option of having the reunion around the time of Anzac Day 2016. However Anzac Day falls on a Monday in 2016 and having at least our first function on a Sunday would add to the cost. Accommodation is also likely to be more expensive at that time. Furthermore several former C Company members may wish to fulfil their Anzac Day commitments in their home towns.

It has been suggested the reunion should include the following:

- a. Meet and Greet function on the first evening.
- b. A short commemorative service at the Vietnam War Memorial.
- c. Tours to the Australian War Memorial to include but not confined to the refurbished World War I galleries being completed for the 2015 Anniversary of Gallipoli; the new Afghanistan gallery and Vietnam Galleries.
- d. A luncheon cruise on Lake Burley Griffin (if there is sufficient demand).
- e. Visits to other Canberra attractions at the discretion of those attending the reunion.
- f. A final dinner.

I am confident we will have a large number attending this reunion. Thanks to Don Harrod we have at least 112 known contact addresses including 88 valid email addresses, and we are in the process of searching for more.

At this preliminary stage we need to know from you please the following:

1. Are you likely to come to a Canberra reunion during the period 15 – 17 March 2016?

2. Would you prefer a two-day or a three-day reunion? (Of course there is nothing to prevent you staying in Canberra for an even longer period to enjoy the variety of attractions.)
3. Would you be interested in joining a relaxing luncheon/sight seeing cruise on Lake Burley Griffin with other C Company members, perhaps on Day Two of the reunion? The boat takes up to 80 for lunch and we would need a minimum of 40. Boat hire for two hours is \$18 per head and lunch for two courses would cost another \$45 per person at today's prices. Bar service is available.

Please email your replies to these 3 questions to: duckden@bigpond.net.au with the subject heading: C Coy Reunion 2016.

Looking forward to seeing you all again,

Claude Ducker"

FOUND – Due to the efforts of Claude and Judith Ducker, and a bit of digging in other areas, we are pleased to advise that we have re-established contact with Aussie Biele, Eddie Kime, Bob Reed, Bob Marshall, Ray Fitzpatrick, Neville Hayne, Frank Moore, John Williams, Snow Kostiuik, Len Smith, John Wogan-Browne, Tony Wass and others to be advised as they respond. After **45+** years, it's great to make contact again.

REMEMBERING MATES – As an aside to our current campaign of tracking down those who have served in C Coy, we have become aware that some of us simply don't remember some of their colleagues. Don't worry! We served together **45** years ago, and nobody has a perfect memory. Name tags – not dog tags this time – will be issued, and you won't even have to sign for them! We still have that lifelong bond, and when we eventually get to meet again in 2016, we will re-establish those friendships within minutes! *Ed.*



TRAVELLING ABOUT:

Jack and Susan Lake have taken off again – this time we believe that they are somewhere on the Murray River.



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.



ANZAC Day 2014, Sydney. Three old mates from 7PL – Andy MacDougal, John Martini and Bill Hartley all met to reminisce. The wet weather did nothing to dampen their spirits.



ANZAC Day 2014 Hervey Bay, Qld. Pictured are Max Postle, Ben Oram, Barry Baker and Bill Titley. AWOL: Jack Bradd.



ANZAC Day, Brisbane, 2014.

The Battalion was well represented.

Photo courtesy of John Hunter.



At the bowling club's ANZAC luncheon were Vietnam vets Don Oakley, Ballina, Don Harrod, Ken Cooper and Laurie Dawson, Langwanna.

ANZAC Day 2014, Coonabarabran NSW. Pictured are Don Oakley (Tracker PL 2nd tour), Don Harrod, Ken Cooper (6RAR 2nd tour), and Laurie Dawson (RA Sigs). Laurie is also the Honorary Chaplain at the Vietnam Vets Memorial at Phillip Island, Vic. *Picture courtesy of the Coonabarabran Times.*

FROM ROGER LAMBERT:

I thought that the 9 Platoon diggers would like to see what dropped six 750 lb bombs to our front on 21 September 1969. This was the 2 Sqn Canberra bomber that delivered the airstrike described in my article “Blondes, Bombs and Bunkers” on the Battalion website: <http://www.5rar.asn.au/soldiers/blondes-bombs-bunkers.htm> ; as most website readers would now be aware, this was the article that led to my tracking down the aircrew of “Magpie 31” (Canberra A84-236), the story of which and the aircraft call-sign on the day became the subject of the next article: <http://www.5rar.asn.au/soldiers/magpie-31-page-1.htm> .

The illustration, which the artist (Graeme Molineux) and I collaborated on, formed part of a tribute poster for the pilot of the Canberra, WNGCDR John Whitehead (AIRCDRE John Whitehead, DSO (retired)), and the widow of his navigator, SQNLDR Bruce Hunt. Graeme has kindly given his permission for the illustration to be used in Half Circle providing that due credit is given to him. Graeme’s website, if others are interested, is here: <http://www.grubby-fingers-aircraft-illustration.com/>
Canberra A84-236 is currently preserved at the RAAF Museum, Point Cook, VIC in her post-Vietnam colours and markings:

http://www.grubby-fingers-aircraft-illustration.com/Canberra_A84-236_walkaround.html

Missing from the airframe, as used by 2 Sqn in Vietnam, are the Australian-designed wing tip bomb crutches that held one 750 lb bomb each.



Half Circle was compiled and edited by Don Harrod – donharrod@bigpond.com, 0418 423 313, or (02) 6842 4913, with help from Claude Ducker, Bill Hartley, Bill Titley, Claude Ducker, Blue Schafer, Geoff Pearson, Roger Lambert, and John Hunter.

In the next edition of Half Circle, one of us (no names) remembers the game of “Alphabet Pub Visits”. We wonder if the current Tigers embark on such projects.