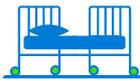


Half Circle



Number 159 – March 2020

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.



AT THE RAP: Peter Commerford, Barrie Taylor. We send our best wishes to our mates who are not as well as they would like to be.

THE MUSHROOM CLUB WEBSITE:

Gary Townsend, the 5RAR Association Memberships Officer and Editor of Tiger Tales, also runs the Mushroom Club Website, mainly focussed on 5RAR's first tour of Vietnam. We will all remember that our Boozer in Vietnam was called the Mushroom Club, christened by our first tour colleagues.

The Mushroom Club website contains information on the National Vietnam Veterans' Museum, and Robert Birtles has been instrumental in 5RAR's contribution to this outstanding tribute to our service to Australia.

The Mushroom Club website is www.cgtownsend.id.au/avv-museum.htm

The Nation Vietnam Veterans' website is www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org/

I think I'm a kleptomaniac, but I don't know what to take for it.

FROM DENNIS (Digger) NEVINS' DIARY:

31st Dec 69.

Once again, no movement into the Ambush last night, at 0730hrs we up stakes then moved down to the LZ area of Binh Ba, the whole Battalion was there and blokes were everywhere.

There weren't enough choppers to move our Company so we had to cram in any way we could. The choppers lifted off and took us to C Companies Area of Operations which is about 1500 yards from the May Tao Mountains, we landed at an LZ that looked like an old Fire Support Base, we harboured for half an hour then move out in Platoon lots.

Our orders were to move 800 yards find a track and Ambush it, the green light was given and the Platoon moved out with our Section leading, after 600 yards we came across a well-used track, it ran down the centre of an Ox Cart track. The Skipper pulled us back 60 yards and told us to tucker up as we hadn't had anything to eat this morning. Half an hour later we moved into Ambush, 1 Section is in the Killer Group, we are 7 feet from the track, there are 12 Claymores out also M79 rounds and Grenades hooked up to a switchbox, there is plenty of power out to our front and flanks, we are certain of Nog's.

In our group is Blue Fitzgerald, Boss, Jack, Myself and Andy. Roy Hicks and Johnny Vis are to our right, I have hooked up 200 rounds on the Gun.

At 1615hrs which is now as I write, 8 Platoon made contact with Nog's when they were moving into Ambush, they got no results but the Nog's have bugged out towards our direction on a track which could be the same track we are on.

Until 1800hrs tomorrow we have been ordered to observe a cease fire for 24hrs, we are not to patrol and can only fire in self-defense, if Nog's come into our ambush, they won't get out alive.

The name of the Fire Support Base for this Operation is FSB Pat.

* Pte Johnny Vis had marched into us from A Company 9RAR.

1st Jan 70.

Andy woke me at 2 minutes before midnight last night and we both saw the New Year in sitting behind my Machine Gun, how exciting. I carried out the midnight to the 0100hr piquet, on it I thought a lot about the new year and my future which looks dim. I guess I've gained a lot in the last 12 months, quite a bit has happened and yet so far, the year has gone well for me. I hope in the new year I'm back in Aussie and not here in this joint.

Nothing came into the Ambush which is disappointing as I was so confident, maybe the Nogs are keeping the truce.

At 0930hrs 2 Section took over from us in the Killer Group and we took their positions around the rear. My Gun is at 6 o'clock, to my left is Roy Hicks and Vis, Jack and Blue are on my right.

9 Platoon made contact today, the Nog's bugged out and as usual no results.

B Company also made contact they found a blood trail and a pack.

Tomorrow we hope to move out of here to a creek.

2nd Jan 70.

No movement into the Ambush, before our O Group the Boss asked Phoungy our Bushman Scout when would the Nog's likely to come along, after a lot of hand signals etc., he reckons about today and 3 in number, we will very much have to be on the lookout. The Nog's will know we're in the area as we choppered in at tree top level for a few thousand yards. The order is now to stay here for today and tonight.

At 1000hrs our Section along with the Boss, Legs, the Arty Sig and 3 blokes from 3 Section, Smith, Davies and Marshall went out on a Recce to our south. South is over side of the track we are Ambushing. The country was really thick and we sweated our guts out getting through it, without doubt some of the thickest stuff we have been through for a while. We came to a creek, there we filled water bottles and had a smoke break for a while then shook out again heading East, again the country was thick.

Further on we rested again, then shook out continuing till we hit the same track our Ambush is on. To my surprise the Boss wanted us to follow it up, we did for 600 yards and all along I felt we would walk into a bunker system, the country is thick bamboo and the track is bloody terrific, I would love see where it heads into. At the 600 yard point the Boss got us to turn around and head back to the Ambush site, we followed the track to the Platoon.

Back at Platoon we had lunch while Doc Halliday took out 2 Section on a Recce up the other end of the track which would be West as we face the track, heading right from the Ambush. They did locate a track but it's most probably the same one as we're Ambushing, they said it twists all over the place.

*There is no further writing on this day, but what would have happened is Doc's Recce would have returned to the Ambush site and normal Ambush routine would have been carried out.

*The point where the Boss turned us around on the Recce after 600 yards I well remember and yet I wrote nothing of it in the diary, the track was a ripper, as we

moved along you felt at any moment something may occur. At the 600-yard point we came to a strange area, it felt uncomfortable, you just sensed Nog's. I don't remember who was scouting as John Marine our normal scout was on R and R but Jack called a halt, to our near front were old Panji Pits the bamboo arrows were sticking up waiting for a victim, the jungle canopy was thick but below there was no undergrowth, it was clear, a little further up was a rising small hill and the top of it we couldn't see as it was in the tree canopy, this was completely different country from where we had just patrolled out from. Jack and I didn't like it one bit, to us it was a killing field and the only place to take cover was the Panji Pits. We called up the Skipper and he agreed this is one place you don't approach unless Air Power has given it a touch up. We had a good Ambush the best idea is to get the enemy to walk into our killing area and not us go into theirs. That's when the Boss said " Let's get back to the ambush", there were no arguments from us. *More next issue.*



TRAVELLING ABOUT:

Bryan and Arleen Schafer – Sydney to Melbourne to visit family.

Many of the old Tigers are currently in Tweed Heads, attending the last 5RAR (Vietnam era) reunion.

Due to there not being many contributions this month, a look through old "Half Circles" has revealed the following:

Half Circle number 14 – January 2008:

Remember:.....

Monsoons, picquet, clean laundry, our boozer, a game of darts, scrubbing mud off webbing, scrim, letters from home, letters to home, Paddy's buns, the practice range, ANPRC 25 sets, paludrine, dapsone, dixies, Jack Bradd's bombs, Jack Lake's roaring, cold (or no water) shaves, mosquito repellent, powdered eggs, plastic potatoes, letters from Mum, letters to Mum, mateship.

Half Circle number 20 – July 2008:

REMEMBER..... Our home in 1969/70 – the rubber plantation at Ap An Phu, Nui Dat.



Half Circle number 46 – October 2010

A GREAT HONOUR: As you may be aware, 5RAR, and particularly C Company are engaged in overseas service. I am pleased to advise that one of our own has been selected to have an operation named after him. Part of the overseas deployment will involve **OPERATION HERBERT**, named after Wayne Robert Herbert MID, of 7PL, whose efforts on the night of 4th July 1969 saved many lives of his comrades. Congratulations Herbie, we're all very proud of you. Ed's note: Please read the citation of the actions of Wayne Herbert on the Battalion website or the new "Year of the Tigers". Was a MID enough?? Another victim of the quota system??

Half Circle number 51 – March 2011



From the top of SAS Hill, Nui Dat, looking straight at the Warbies.

Photo courtesy of Barrie Taylor, his son and daughter-in-law.

Photo taken 2010.

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