

131 Locators Association Inc



President's Report for FY 2014 – 2015

I am delighted to write the President's Report for the financial year 2014-2015. This period represents our fourth full-year of operation and shows a continuing growth in all aspects of the Association's activities. Unfortunately I am unable to attend this year's AGM and Vice-President Bert Blink has kindly agreed to present my report to the meeting.

The Association remains financial, viable and, sustainable for the immediate future. The age of the members still remains our limiting factor. Many of the early Nashos have celebrated or will celebrate their 70th birthdays within a year of this meeting. Contact with those who served in the Detachment and those who served at Holsworthy remains incomplete.

The reporting period saw another anniversary for the Pioneers, that is the first group to be sent to SVN – 49 years ago. They paved the way for others who followed as part of the 131 Detachment.

The Association website, www.131locators.org.au continues to give us both a web presence and a defined identity. Bob Billiards has continued as our Webmaster, providing an essential role in doing so. Thank you Bob. There was a small hiccup in operation of the website earlier in the year due to a software issue, which was quickly resolved. The site statistics which are regularly reported in *Eyes and Ears* demonstrate the ongoing interest in our activities. Some of the contact source countries are unusual, to say the least.

Eyes and Ears, under the editorial guidance of Paul Dickson, appears monthly, with editions of 18-20 pages. That is an amazing measure of our Association success. Members contributions illustrate that we are recording more of relevance from our military past for both history and information. The June 2015 edition was the 82nd in this new series.

A range of other activities, meetings, reunions and events were part of the year's program.

Highlights for 2014-2015 included:

- twelve editions of *Eyes and Ears*; extremely well done Dicko and your enthusiasm is infectious; and thanks to all of our contributors for stories, photos and some history
- attendance by a major turnout of 131 Veterans at the Seymour Vietnam Veterans Memorial Walk in May 2015; we now have a large plaque celebrating the Detachment's role in SVN in Seymour
- after the Seymour celebrations in May a 131 plaque was laid and commemorated at the Vietnam Veterans Museum at Phillip Island in Victoria

- production and publication of four locator profiles; we need more to be submitted to assist our recording of 131 history
- a \$200 donation to Australian Artillery Historic Company toward the restoration of an 18 pounder which was unveiled in Canberra on Anzac day
- at the end of June 2015 there were 146 members of the Association, which represents a slow, but nevertheless meaningful growth
- regular Committee meetings to manage the Association and the involvement of Regional Representatives to help spread the load
- contributions from former Detachment OCs setting out their recollections of their time in SVN
- national Anzac Day march attendances and social follow up in each State
- attendance at national Vietnam Veterans' Day events on August 18th, and
- an ongoing growth in material, photos and stories on the website.

A special mention for the Committee members for making things happen for the Association. Bert Blink accepted the role of Vice-President and is generous of his time in attending our Committee meetings, driving from Canberra each month.

Grahame Dignam, Treasurer/Secretary, has been the 'glue' for the Association's financial arrangements, records and operation of the membership database. Ernie Newbold, Nick Proskurin other Committee Members – Vic Danko (Public Officer), Ian Amos, George Lane and Ged Carroll are acknowledged for their ongoing involvement and support.

Our regional representatives provided local overview and contributed to our planning program. I thank Bert Blink (ACT and doubling up as a Committee member), Al Adams (VIC), Geoff Blackwell (SA), Barry Guzder (WA), Stuart Sporn (NT), Terry Erbs (QLD) and forward scouts in rural Victoria, Ron Mason and Rieny Nieuwenhof, for their collective contribution. A note of appreciation to our Honorary Auditor, Jim Fitzgerald, for keeping us on the financial straight and narrow.

Sadly the names of more of our number have now been etched onto the Association Honour Roll. Lest we forget.

Allen Morley
November 2015