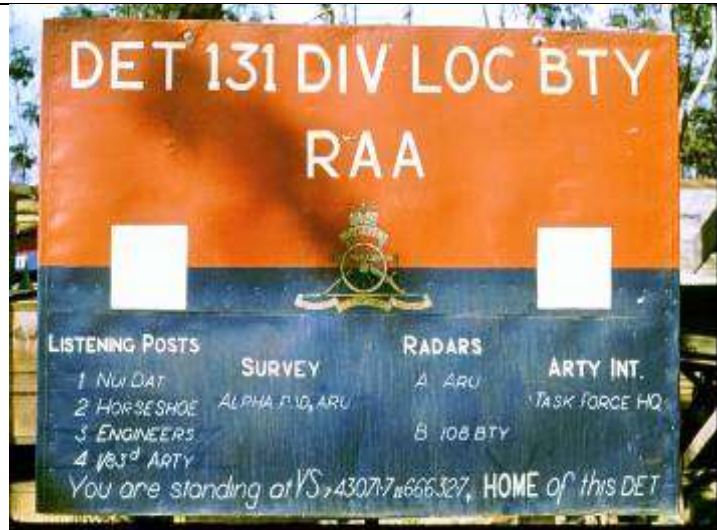




THE EYES and EARS

No.0017 – 30/04/2010

"FIRST PUBLISHED 22nd JULY 1967
at Nui Dat, South Vietnam"



Editor contact email: three-zero@hotmail.com Ed – Paul 'Dicko' Dickson

Daylight savings (let's hope you put some away?) ended last month which was great otherwise the Formula 1 GP in Melbourne could have meant the cars would have had to have headlights fitted, it means now that you can catch that flight to WA from the East Coast before you need another shave prior to landing, Queenslanders' curtains can now be used normally as they won't fade, though the 10 year time difference compensates for their non-involvement, SA and NT are in the middle so who cares and NSW isn't quite sure what happened as nothing seems to happen – they appear to be always in the dark!

Heard and seen...

. **Allen Morley joins** the crew here as he volunteered to help out and his wish has been granted. Al is going to look after our Profiles Dept, so for those of you who haven't completed one as yet, you'll now get some heat from someone else other than **Ed**. However, it's a pet project and as I keep saying it builds our archives of living history and introduces new mates to all of us. Thanks Allen.

. **Lea Leplaw Deichmann**, daughter of the late **Garry Leplaw** contacted us with the following email and **Ed's** wondering how we can answer Lee's questions. I have sent Lee an initial email and going to copy this edition of E&E's to her. However, can I please send in some more info and hopefully photos to forward on to Lee?

- "Hello there, I know this might seem rather random, but I was just doing a web search for my father's name and a link to your 'Eyes & Ears Nov09' newsletter came up.

After a quick read through, I noticed that you have my dad's name in a list of people that you have not yet contacted. I thought I would write you to let you know that my dad, Garry James Leplaw, passed away Dec 6th 1983 after a motorcycle accident in NSW. Dad is survived by me, my 2 brothers and my mum. He is now the grandfather to 2 children (to my older brother) as well, although he never got to know them (they both look heaps like him though).

Obviously, 1983 was a long time ago, and I have lived for most of my life without my dad, but I was wondering if you could tell me what division/battalion he was in (sorry, I'm not very au fait with army speak, so I hope I got that right). I am living in Denmark now, with my Danish husband and we are both interested in seeing what we can find out about his time in Vietnam. We hope to be starting our own family soon, and it would be nice to be able to tell our children about their grandfather.

I am attaching a few pictures of my dad - some from his wedding day and one that was taken a few weeks before he died. I thought maybe you could show it to your readers to see if any of them remember him, and might have any stories to share. Thanks in advance, Lea Leplaw Deichmann"



. **Jane Gow got a request** in with this email and we're glad to help out – 'Hi Paul, If you haven't done the April Newsletter yet, can you mention for us that we are having our first AGM at Coffs on the 1st May at the Club starting at 10.30am with a service at the cenotaph, then meeting, then a free BBQ lunch. All are welcome, but need to know how many are coming for catering purposes. Thanks for your help. Regards Jane Gow'

. **Derek Hinde responded** to an email (from a lead from Geoff Holden – yeah, I know it sounds complicated, but we try hard to track people and info down) from **Ed** as to who was the tall bloke on the Sydney ANZAC Day photo (see later) - "Thanks Paul, I was going to say I was the "good looking bloke" on the 2nd left hand side.....but at 6'3" I was nicknamed "pull-thru" at Kapooka!!

Also I attended the Lions Club Anzac Dinner at Castle Hill RSL on 27th Apr 2010 and the Guest Speaker was Colonel Ian Ahearn GPO/FO 102Bty Coral. His power-point presentation of "The Battle of Coral" May 1968 was fantastic. I have lots of slides and maps...which I have many...as I arrived at the Dat in July'68. Also present was Col. Don Tait. Regards, Derek. #2787403 L/Bdr."

. **Howard Young got time** to send this in – "G'day Paul, or do you prefer Dicko? I am not able to devote much time to anything else at the moment, being in the thralls of a traumatic relocation. As 79 and 77 year old retirees, my lady and I have sold our Kununurra property, and after being in Kununurra for 46 years, are moving to Darwin. We have to be out of here by 5th May, the disposal of the accumulated gear (Junk?) is horrendous. In a few months time I may be able to write you some stories of my days in 131 – sorry - particularly of when we were the surveyors for 2 Div. Cheers. Howard Young."

...a week or so later **Howard followed** up with this email in response to **Ed's – 'Roll of Honour'** email..."G'day, Dicko.

The letter below is not a Locator matter, but is one that is dear to my heart.

Perhaps our locator mob could help us to sort it out, and find where the brave Sister is buried. It is more than time that she was afforded the care and attention that is due to her remains.

I will look at the Roll of Honour as soon as I get settled in Tiwi.

Cheers, Howard Young.

The Editor,

Letters to the Editor,

G'day.

Your news item February 15 "Behind scenes of Darwin bombing" brought to mind one of the unsolved mysteries of that event.

On board the hospital ship "Manunda" during the first raid, Sister Margaret de Mestre was wounded by shrapnel and died soon after.

From the records current, it appears likely that her body was one of 19 that were taken ashore from the "Manunda" on the morning of February 20. These bodies lay on the beach all day, late on that afternoon or evening the skipper of "Manunda" was instructed to recover these bodies and take them back on board.

That evening, before he had time to organise this, he was advised that alternative arrangements had been made.

.A member of a burial party has related how he was involved in burying on the beach that night of a number of bodies in a mass grave.

He related how this burial party found that one body was that of a female, they thought she was a nurse, so they dug a separate grave for her, up the slope a little above the beach...

Was this body that of Sister de Mestre?

Sister de Mestre was the first Australian Army nurse killed in World War II. She has no known grave. Her family would like to know what happened to her body. Sister de Mestre was not one of the service bodies interred later at the Adelaide River War Cemetery.

Probably rashly, I have undertaken to try and find her body for her family. The de Measures were our neighbours back in 1942; I went to school with her younger brother. He is a resident of Bellingen, NSW, where we grew up.

Later this year I expect to become a permanent resident of Darwin, so will continue this search then.

Meanwhile, is there anyone out there who can provide any clues as to what happened to the body of this Australian hero? It is a disgrace that we do not know.

Howard Young." **Ed** – It is just so good to have passion – can we help fellas?

. **Warwick Brooker responds** to an earlier topic and a submission from **Ernie Newbold** – "G'day Dicko, Regarding beer on ops: I can't remember paying for it, unless it was deducted from our 'danger money'. Perhaps those cans were on Ian Yerbury or Warwick Hamilton.

Quote:

Ernie gets back to us with another piece of interesting information with regards to a side story concerning Warwick Brooker and some great photos he supplied to a website..."G'day Paul, I have come across another website that may be of interest which contains 27 of Warwick Brooker's photos.

Here is the link. <http://battleoflongtan.ning.com/profile/WarwickBrooker>

Regards, Ernie."

Sorry if I've never informed you about the Long Tan website. Glad the photos are appreciated. Now you can see why the Surveyors were so busy, multitasking on a regular basis: survey, LP, photography and radar... and heaps of artillery intelligence! Naturally we moved fast when 'the going looked like getting hot'; we were indispensable and irreplaceable! Brookey."

...then **Brookey** adds an email on a very interesting subject (this originated from the subject "What were you doing at the time of Coral" – his extract from that email goes like this – "there were times when I wished that Warwick Hamilton's submission to keep some of us in Vietnam for a few extra months (voluntarily) had been successful. etc")... "Dicko, If I remember correctly, the people whom Capt Hamilton asked to extend for three months (which would have taken in Coral) were all Nashos. There were four of us, I think. After agreeing to Warwick's request -- I can't remember how many agreed, but I did -- we were fully expecting to do the extra time. However, Warwick came back to us a couple of weeks later to inform us that his submission had been knocked back by Canberra. I could never understand that: as a 6th Intaker who went to Vietnam with mainly 3rd Intakers, I still had seven months' military service up my sleeve. I was in Vietnam for nine and a half months and many Nashos did 12 months and some probably more. I guess it's just one of those many puzzling Canberra decisions, Brookey." **Ed** – It's a curious as well as an interesting story?

. **Allen Morley** sends this in..."Hi Paul, Another long-distance edition hits the presses. Well done. A good read, some reminisces and the usual surprises. Thanks for the effort and time involved. I have begun scanning in my slides and there are a few surprises. One taken in the Locator's Lounge has very recognisable Ray Hutchinson, Bob Retrot, Ken McNamara and Frank Ipsa from the first pass. I also have a pic of our dunny for some reason! Cheers, Allen." **Ed** – see extract below re the continuing Ray Hutchinson saga after Craig Cook's story.

. **Robert Sealey** got in touch with – "Thanks for the news. I have been asked for photos I took in the 1950-60 of the 22 Fd Regt SP or the 132 Div Loc at Pucka by the Arty Historians. Would E mailed pics of Loc equipment of those ancient times be useful? We used trained magpies for most of the spotting work. Old Robert" **Ed** – Robert try us with photos – we are keen to share info and photos anytime?

. **Geoff Holden** went archive digging and found the following...



G'day Paul

Going thru some slides for Bert Blink and found this one when we were leaving SVN.

Ian Amos, Gordon Malcolm, Ken Woodbine, Nick Armstrong and Bob Billiards.

Cheers, Geoff

Ed – were these blokes shaving at this stage? They look more like "School Cadets" than Vets.

. **Craig Cook** got back to us with an email containing various items, so **Ed** thought he'd break them up under headings to get further comment/s...

"Hello again Paul, I have just received E&E #16 and also want to add a few comments.

Last Post v's Taps... Re: the words to Last Post. As others allude, the words and the story circulating DO NOT apply to our Last Post. While we may tend to follow the American trend in most things the Last Post is definitely British and was just one of many "hundreds" of calls or reminders to soldiers to perform some action or duty during their day. The words used do not actually fit the metre of the call!! It does fit however the American Taps, and as to the story quoted I do not know whether it's true or not however it also is a very haunting call, especially when played in ceremonial form. I have never heard the Americans refer to a last post but only Taps.

The call we use is to indicate the end of the soldiers' working day and from times of long ago was played to call the troops back to barracks before the next call which was simply LIGHTS OUT. Lights out is just the first four notes from the first two bars of the Last Post. When played [sung] they simply said LIGHTS OUT, LIGHTS OUT.

This probably stems from the ancient days of the town Crier or night Watchman going around singing out "Alls well"

All the other calls used in the British army could also have words put to them that a bugler would remember, as do the troops. Most calls have now disappeared into the depths of history but a soldier's life was once regulated by the need of these calls to carry out many tasks. In early days of Artillery and other mounted units there were calls such to Water the horses, Feed the horses, Muck out the stables, to trot, to canter, to charge, Wheel left or Right etc. The other call associated now with the Last Post is the Reveille [or Rouse] and this was the wakeup call [or alarm clock] at start of the day. There is a long and a short Rouse call and the long one is often used in ceremonial and can be played by two buglers, especially moving when played in a large acoustic chamber such as a Shrine or cathedral building.

Nowadays I don't believe it's played except in ceremonial. Even in my last few years in uniform I never heard it played over tannoys or PA's while in barracks. The third Ceremonial call still played now is at the lowering of the flag. This is called the "Retreat" however I could never reconcile this call and its name as I was taught an army never retreats it always retires in good order. The Retreat indicates the end of the working day when soldiers would come back from the field to rest and to do other duties before the next day starts again. Somewhere I still have a small booklet called 101 Bugle calls which I used to once know how to play as I spent four years in school cadets in a Drum & Bugle band before

joining the army. We also had to know without use of music over twenty odd bugle marches known only by their numerical number.

...then Ray Hutchinson...On another matter in the photographs in current edition you have a Ray Hutchinson. I wonder if he was posted to 132 Bty in Brighton [Melb] C1966-67 as we had a Bdr in Q store by that name. I vaguely remember his face but cannot ID him from this photo. If it's the same I have no idea where he went to after this posting. The BQMS at that time was SSgt Les Puddy however I don't know if he came from 131 Bty before but I believe he had ribbons up from the 2 AIF.

...followed by Draftsmen in the Battery... Another comment was made about 131 Bty having many draftsmen in the unit. I do remember from recruiting brochures of the late 1950's to 1960's that this was a particular skill required by the army, along with surveyors for the unit. I assumed it was because of the need to keep accurate and neat calculation strings along with BP cards, draw field maps and produce field sketches. I guess that need fell away in later years although they did achieve Group 16 pay level. But the trade seems to have slipped as they are a grouped with Meteorologists now. Perhaps the introduction of the PIM, PADS, hand held calculators and the GPS have outgrown the need for survey schemes as we once new them. Stand on a position, press a button and read out the Co- ords and Alt and bug out. Survey done! No need for telltale Banderoles on hilltop or flashing lamps to give away your position!

...and lo and behold Radars...When 131 Div Loc Bty celebrated its 50th, before its title changed to STA I attended at Enoggera to make a presentation along with others from 132Bty of a photograph of a 3Mk7 radar which was the predecessor of the AN/KPQ1 and it was surprising that at that time there wasn't anyone who remembered it nor were there any photographs of it in 131's records. I wonder how many of the members here can say they remember it or that they actually trained on it?? It was still in service in 1965 when the two batteries [131 & 132] combined for a field exercise at Holdsworthy. I think that 133 retained 3Mk7 radar after its birth and separation from 131 but maybe people can offer up some further photographs for inclusion.

...then...Finally I note that Dave Troedel, Rob Sealey and Peter Wertheimer all from 132 Bty have also logged on to receive the E&E. Look forward to reading #17. Regards **Craig Cook**"

...you can't keep Keith Ayliffe away from those things with eras on – **Radars – Ed** sent him the following on behalf of **Craig Cook** – "Keith, Good morning! As our Resident expert on things Radar (to mention only part of your vast repertoire) I've forwarded this excerpt from an email from Craig Cook which I thought might be of interest to you -

"When 131 Div Loc Bty celebrated its 50th, before its title changed to STA I attended at Enoggera to make a presentation along with others from 132Bty of a photograph of a 3Mk7 radar which was the predecessor of the AN/KPQ1 and it was surprising that at that time there wasn't anyone who remembered it nor were there any photographs of it in 131's records. I wonder how many of the members here can say they remember it or that they actually trained on it?? It was still in service in 1965 when the two batteries [131 & 132] combined for a field exercise at Holdsworthy. I think that 133 retained 3Mk7 radar after its birth and separation from 131 but maybe people can offer up some further photographs for inclusion." - any comment? I'll keep the item to run in the next E&E's. Paul"

...and bugger me Keith replied within about 12 minutes with..."G'day Paul, SOOO now you want to show up my age as well, Curse you Craig I thought these things were only fleeting memories.

The 3 Mk VII radar began its life as a mortar locating radar in 20 Locating Regt in 1954. Although originally designed as an early aircraft warning radar and used by the Bird gunners. 20 Locating Regiment closed in 1960 and the radars went to 131 Div Loc Bty.

They were replaced by the ANK in 1964.

The 3 Mk VII remained as a training aid at the School of Arty until I believe the early seventies. Many of your members may remember them as they were nearly always on display at the radar training area of North Head. It was used to train ARes soldiers particularly 132 Bty people.

The 3 Mk VII was also used for many years as a Met radar to track the radio sonde weather balloons for 131 and S of A. When I was posted to the S of A 69 70, Myself, Tony Dodds, and Garth Nichols among others had the unenviable task of starting them up every day to do the test and adjustment program for them.

They had an advantage over the ANK, in that they had a cooling system which could keep a strategically placed half dozen "soft Drinks" cold.

For the tech minded the 3 Mk VII was a continuous wave radar against the ANK which was a pulsed radar.

Paul congrats on last effort with E&E, where were you when we tried to originally get members for our fledgling Locating Association.

Craig of course is right when he states that 132 Div Loc Bty indeed did have at least one working 3Mk VII until 1972. Best regards Keith"

...and then mentioning Ray Hutchins gets **Allen Morley to respond** with this (extract from one of his emails)..."Ray Hutchinson (Ray the Reg) looked after the Q-store and was a regular soldier. He is one of four sleeping in our 131 HQ plebs tent, together with **John Vitkovsky** (or as Mudguts Long used to call him, Vitkosky), **Bill Thomas** and me. Ray left Nui Dat after me and I have neither seen him nor heard of him since. He lived in Elsternwick or Elwood in Melbourne. I will do a bit of a search and see if we cannot track him down. Anzac Day in Melbourne may be a possibility for a search."

Ed's curious to know what the Q store lot actually did other than wear our clothes before we got them, read our mail, put pin prick holes in our blow up mattresses, pre-chew our rations, alter our service dates, only stock size 6 boots and so on...there's got to be a myriad of other things – can anyone think of a couple or 600 that could be added to this list, then

let us know? Plus **Bill Thomas** – has anyone kept in touch or knows of his whereabouts and **John Vitkovsky** for that matter?

. **Bert's Corner** by Bert Blink – **Ed** in this issue it was too hard not to dedicate some of it to Bert because he covers a few topics..."Hi, I assume you all had some mention of the reopening of the Cafe, new parking area and return of "Weary" Dunlop at the AWM. This also included views of the soon to be dedicated, 8th Sep 2010, National Serviceman's Memorial. - <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/04/15/2874025.htm?site=canberra> ...and a request from Bert for another project he is undertaking he needs our assistance with....'And now the title of my email. In order to get the following included in the National Serviceman's Association of Australia Presidents Bulletin:-

"Bert Blink, a National Serviceman 1966-68, would like other NS men 1965 - 1972 to contact him with their Date of Enlistment & Date of Discharge details as given in their Certificate Of Discharge. Also if known their Intake number. His email address is bertblink@live.com and the Subject line should simply say NS Intake details."

I (a) joined and (b) wrote an article about 131 for their QLD branch Nasho News - see

http://www.nashoqlid.org.au/uploaddir/News_letter_98.pdf page 6-7. I

had lots of help from **Keith, Bob & Grahame**, all of whom did proof-reading & added to my forgotten stock of memories.

...**Ed** – here's an extract of Bert's article without the photos – it's really worth the read in full and so is Locrep for a squiz at the photos...see the link above...

"THE EYES AND EARS OF THE TASK FORCE

The history of the development of warfare has involved finding ways to hit your enemy beyond the reach of the sword. Slings, spears, arrows, catapults, trebuchets, cannon, small arms, rifles, artillery and missiles have increased the range but also brought the need, in long-range gunnery, to pinpoint the enemy's location for attack and to prevent him retaliating. This was particularly important in Vietnam where jungle often hid Allied and enemy positions particularly artillery and mortar posts. The 131 Divisional Locating Battery of the Royal Australian Artillery was small in numbers but did a big job.

While the battle of Long Tan helped to discourage large scale infantry attacks by North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Vietcong (VC) forces on Nui Dat, the use of Listening Posts and Radar by 131 similarly deterred artillery attacks on Nui Dat because of the rapid response with artillery fire on their firing positions.

3789692 Gunner Bert Blink, a National Serviceman born in the Netherlands, recalls the Battery's role in the 1st Australian Task Force during his service there from June 1967 to May 1968: 'National Servicemen, many of whom had suitable qualifications for training in specialisations such as surveying, formed approximately 62% of 131's strength. The Battery was a Detachment as it was permanently stationed in Vietnam and personnel rotated in and out over the period of the war. It consisted of: -

Listening Posts (LPs)

– 31A (on top of Nui Dat hill), 31B (the Horse Shoe – a high feature to the east of Nui Dat), 31C (Engineer's Compound – on the Eastern perimeter of 1 ATF) & 31D (in A Battery 1/83rd US Artillery compound on the southern side of 1 ATF)

Radars

– 3 x AN/KPQ-1 sets located with each Australian Gun Battery & one spare. The radars had severe problems during initial use. The Americans, who initially had 7 of these units, had already returned them to the US by mid 1966 Sound Ranging (introduced late 1968) 'These were all for the purposes of Surveillance and Target Acquisition, firstly to protect the Australian Task Force (1 ATF) Nui Dat and secondly to do the same for Fire Support Bases.

Survey

-the purpose was to supply "Theatre grid", i.e. coordinates and bearings, to Gun Batteries moving to proposed FSBs.

Equipment used included:-

- Wilde T2 Theodolites.
- MRA 3 Tellurometers (suffered severely from the Vietnam tropical humidity).
- CURTA mechanical calculators (at left).

'Artillery Tactical Headquarters

-manned a central radio for obtaining reports from Listening posts, Radars and later Sound Ranging for co-ordinating Artillery response.

Detachment 131 was an authorised Artillery Observer and therefore could request and control fire missions from all Artillery units at Nui Dat or at FSBs. This included the 2/35th and 1/83rd US Gun Batteries (both used Self-Propelled (SP) Guns). The 2/35th had 6 x 155mm Guns and the 1/83rd had 2 x 8 inch and 2 x 175mm Guns (note the barrels could be interchanged to any combination of these two sizes). The 1st Australian Task Force had the two US Gun Batteries, one NZ Gun Battery (161) and two Australian Gun Batteries (all towed 105mm guns).

'Artillery Intelligence:

- This was part of the Artillery Tactical Headquarters and its main job was to determine and regularly update the Artillery capability of our NVA/VC opponents. This intelligence was used, early on, to define two perimeters out from 1 ATF's barbed wire defence.

The first was called **Line Alpha**, and was the range of the VC's 81mm mortars (approximately 4-5 Kilometres); the second called **Line Bravo**, was the range of the VC's artillery (approximately 9-10 Kilometres). These areas were cleared

by regular patrolling and were no go areas for local Vietnamese and thus involved the relocation of some Vietnamese villages.

'131 and Vietnam 1966 – 1968:

Detachment 131 moved into 1 ATF - Nui Dat along with most of the other units in early June 1966. The detachment was immediately in action during the day before the battle of Long Tan. On 17th August the Task Force was attacked by Mortars, 57mm Recoilless Rifles and a 70 mm Field Gun. There were 24 casualties, 2 of these were 131 personnel, and location reports from LPs were used to return fire which silenced the NVA/VC artillery.

Details from 131 Operational Reports, covering 1967, indicate that life in 131 followed a more mundane routine than that in the later months of 1966. This was partly due to the reluctance of the NVA/VC to attack Nui Dat after our successes at Long Tan and on Operation Bribie. It was also the time that most of our facilities were completed and this included a 131 Recreation Room and Orderly Room.

'In February 1968 the NVA/VC commenced what has become known as the **Tet Offensive**. The battles of Coral/Coogee/Balmoral, Operation Toan Thang (Complete Victory) 1, were probably the worst experience encountered by 131 personnel in the whole time we were in Vietnam. The FSB, at Coral, was overrun by NVA on the evening of 12/13 May 1968 and again attacked on the evening of 15/16 May. 131 personnel were a large contingent at the 40th Anniversary of Coral, in Canberra, 12 May 2008.

'National Service

131s strength varied but it never exceeded one hundred. According to Keith Ayliffe, the Locating Artillery historian, approximately 62% of these were National Servicemen. This, he said, was probably due to a requirement for higher educational requirements related to the Detachment's Survey responsibilities. While 131 used rotation to maintain staffing levels this was a little erratic in the first 12-18 months. In one case in early 67, 47 personnel were Returned to Australia (RTA) but replacements did not arrive until a week later. As well some postings were of a very short duration and in the August 1967 Operational report a group complained and requested they be able to stay longer.

'I was in National Service (NS) Intake 6 and did my basic training at Puckapunyal, 12 Platoon and Core training at North Head. I arrived in Vietnam on 10 June 1967. I joined a group of 5 people, Merv Dart and me, Barry Guzder, Grahame Dignam & John Blake (all except Merv were Nashos), assigned to LP 31D. This LP had just been setup inside the USA Battery 1/83rd compound. Apart from members of this Battery being a great bunch, many things made this assignment better. First you were on duty beside a member of the 1/83rd so if you fell asleep they were able to wake you when radio checks were called. Second we were fully billeted with the 1/83rd so our accommodation was better, we were housed in huts on concrete floors and the food was far better – you could ask how your eggs were to be cooked.

'A minus was that the path from our hut to the LP passed very near to the guns and, at night, it took some concentration to avoid walking under a gun just as it was being fired. In October 1967 I moved to Arty Tac and remained there until my RTA on 21 May 1968.

As indicated above, February 1968 saw the commencement of the Tet Offensive. I went on several Operations during that time. I missed out on going to FSB Coral, being returned to Nui Dat prior to my return home. After returning to Australia I served out my NS time in the Sergeant's Mess at Holsworthy. I subsequently used the Post-discharge Training Scheme to attend ANU and complete a BA 1969-1971."

Again have a good Anzac day next Sunday. I hope to see some of the Sydney people in May time permitting for the opening. **Bert**"

...then Bert sent the following photo in and it begs some comments...



OK - it's at Locator's Lounge and from the bottom left going clockwise is – Peter? (Reg Gardner's Batman), Tony Goldsmith, Bob "Woof" Bruce, Leigh Hemming, Dicko, Max Troynar, Ron "Mook" Evans, Geoff Blackwell, Peter "Tube" Fletcher and Warwick Hamilton.

Wouldn't take too much to guess that Geoff's pouring Champers, there's a tin of ETA Cashews, a bottle of pickled onions and a tin of something in front of "Mook" – class act!
However, there's a cake with candles with 21 candles – so whose birthday was it??

Ed – thanks Bert for the effort.

. Boys and their Toys in the '60's & '70's!

The fun continues with some more blokes and motoring passions in their lives in the '60's...thank God "Fletch" had a Holden and NOT one of those poncy 4 cylinder excuses for a car, that is until he got home and lost the plot completely...how could a Balgowlah Boy put a board on a Frogmobile – did he go to the beach in the dark??...anyway here are another 3 bloke's youthful indulgences...

. Brian Campbell-

'Yes I had a Mini Cooper which was written off by a drunk in Mosman on the way back to North Head one Sunday night with my parade gear on board ready for BC's parade the next morning! I then bought a Mk11 Sprite which sat in the garage for 9 months while I was away and sold before I got back. Then it was marriage and the EK Holden took over.'

Ed – ah a Mk 11 Sprite – the 111A was better!

. Peter Fuhrmann -

'Well Dicko, I had a fairly mundane '64 Ford Cortina in those days which occasionally transported troops from Holsworthy to Vic for short leave spells. Sold it in '67 when I went to SVN and didn't buy another (Cortina) until I got back in civvies. However, many thanks to Wayne (?) from Ordinance, who lent me his old Holden for a few months, whilst I was seconded from 131 to the Marangaroo Ordinance Depot to man the security gate. It even came with a good looking nurse in the passenger seat for one memorable country Ball in Lithgow that year ('68). Made a Victorian feel right at home! Regards, Peter F.'

Ed – the old Holden v's Ford rivalry!

. Peter Fletcher –



'G'day Dicko, Attached is a photo of my pride and joy which I used to run from my home at Nth Balgowlah to Holsworthy Barracks regularly without a hitch.

It was a 1953 Holden British Racing Green in colour, lowered front and back, wide wheels, extractors, twin carbs, Lukey muffler etc. As well as fitted with a camping body which was regularly put to the test with the fairer sex at the time.

As Wirey Hackett used to say to me 'it looks good and sounds hot Fletch, but performance wise it would not blow the hat off your head. Get a real car that goes!'

I sold it to a friend just before I left for Vietnam whose wife promptly wrote it off. A sad demise. Fortunately no one was injured.

When I returned from Vietnam I purchase a brand new Renault 10 sedan which although was reliable, definitely would not have blown the hat off your head. Wirey would not have been impressed with my purchase.

Regards, Fletch.'

. ANZAC Day...

Kevin Browning sent the following in responding to **Ed's** – 'Roll of Honour' email



Paul,
Last November I attended a conference at the School of Artillery, Puckapunyal. I took the opportunity to visit Jimmy Menz' grave at Marysville to pay my respects. Attached are two photos which may be of interest. As you know Marysville was devastated in last year's fire which also swept over the cemetery site.
Regards, Kevin



The Ode

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

The Ode comes from For the Fallen, a poem by the English poet and writer Laurence Binyon and was published in London in The Winnowing Fan: Poems of the Great War in 1914. This verse, which became the Ode for the Returned and Services League, has been used in association with commemoration services in Australia since 1921.

Now around the "Marches"...

. **Nick Armstrong** made Port Lincoln his focus on 25 April – "Hello Dicko, I attended the Dawn Service, and March at Port Lincoln this year.

The 25lb field gun has been restored, and fired three blank rounds. My wife says she now understands what happened to my hearing. Forty years working around earthmoving machinery may also have something to do with hearing damage! Cheers for now, Nick"...



The picture on the left is me marching through Port Lincoln, and the one the right is standing near a working 25lb Field gun.



. **Allen Morley managed** a few words on the Sydney March and lunch afterwards...and combined with a few photos courtesy of **Ernie Newbold**...



Here we go from left to right - Leigh Hemming, Derek Hinde, Nick Proskurin, Geoff Holden, Phil Endicott, Mick Holden, Allen Morley, Ken Woodbine, Ian Amos, Ernest Newbold, Bob Billiards, Al Adams, Ken McNamara, Vic Danko, Bob King, Pappy Gault, Kanga McFadden, Garry Smith and Warwick Brooker

Anzac Day for the tenth year of the new century dawned damp but warm. Some things never change in the Army so both the meeting time and location bore little resemblance to the actuality. Nevertheless, 131 was there in numbers.

Ian Amos, Ernie Newbold Ken Woodbine Geoff Holden and Mick Holden were the early starters. Roger McDonnell and Ken McNamara were the last arrivals, just pipping Nick Proskurin who claimed to have become lost without his GPS. A total of 34 131ers marching was a great attendance, perhaps the best since the late 1960s. A couple of first timers were there, which made the day special.

It obviously takes nashos less time to forget how to march than it did to learn at Pucka, Kapooka and Singleton. Behind the 131 banner the gunners marched proudly with fewer than 50% out of step at any time. Bob King with unusual enthusiasm shared photos of his first grandchild as we began to march. We had two young girl army cadets to carry the banner for 131. That was appreciated girls.



The "Locators" being led by Allan Harrison

After the march 131ers dispersed so quickly that it appeared each of them believed he was due for the next shout. However, the bars drew groups together until lunch at City Tatts organised [sic] by Vic Danko. Then the serious stuff really began.



Garry Smith, Vic Danko, Allen Morley and Ken Long

Bob Billiards, Al Adams, Kanga McFadden, Ken McNamara, Brian Killworth & Warwick Brooker

Phil Endicott, Ken McNamara, Brian Killworth & Warwick Brooker



On the left we've got Roger McDonnell and Leigh Hemming checking the race guide!

And then a proud Dad...

Dicko, My youngest son Tim, transferred from the Army band to the RAAF band last year and so we caught up after he completed his runs. He is an extremely good musician and I am very proud of him.
Regards Bob (Billiards)



Sixteen nashos around a table was sort of the last supper plus three. Leigh Hemming was down from Queensland, Warwick Brooker up from Canberra and Al Adams had ventured from Melbourne. Ken McNamara and Kanga McFadden represented northern NSW while Ken Long and Roger McDonnell had trained down from Newcastle. Thanks fellas for the effort. The remainder were locals. The tall tales ruled and 'I remember ...' was a common start to a new conversation. Unfortunately despite an excellent cross-section of Nui Dat veterans the identification of some in photos was hit and miss to say the least. Why did Ian Amos have that bread roll in his back pocket at a BBQ in late 1967?

By the time we departed City Tatts the sky had cleared but some of the heads had begun to cloud over. A commitment from most to attend in 2011 – actually a combined Easter Monday-Anzac Day augurs well for our next major get together. Let us not forget for next year. There would seem to be no real reason that numbers for 2011 cannot be increased above this year's.

AWOL: Grahame 'handbrake' Dignam was a late scratching, Wirey Hackett was unwell, and Peter Fletcher was a no-show.

Ed...there is a sequel to 'handbrake' Dignam being AWOL as attested to by the following email response... – "If you think I'm going to spill my guts and tell you I had a motor vehicle incident I'M NOT!!

The story that I left the handbrake off after parking the car will only be verified under Chinese torture and thumbscrews..! The part about having transport difficulties on the Sunday morning following cannot be refuted however!

As my wifey says "Unfortunately he's not injured"!!!! Regards Dig"

...let's continue...

On parade: Ken McNamara, Geoff Holden, Mick Holden, Warwick Brooker, Kanga McFadden, Bob Billiards, Ernie Newbold, Garry Smith, Phil Endicott, George Lane, Brian Killworth, Allan Adams, Vic Danko, Ian Amos, Leigh Hemming, Roger McDonnell, Ken Long, Ken Woodbine, Ken Jones, Nick Proskurin, Bob King and Allen Morley were recorded. Apologies to others I have missed. **Ed** – Ian Amos's email below adds another 5 blokes who missed the photo opportunity – fellas, next time can we catch the earlier bus/train or something!!

. Ian Amos enjoyed the 25th in Sydney and sent this in... "Paul, Yes, 25th was good as usual. Now that I know more of the group (and met on the day a couple I hadn't spoken to before), it made the pre-march time more enjoyable.

A few others turned up after the photo was taken including Merv Nairn, Ged Carroll, George Lane, Gordon Malcolm and Ken Jones. Pity they missed out, better luck next year!!!

I'm told that as the unit marched by the TV cameras, the commentator identified us and said "looks like a lot of radar operators here today". A couple of surveyors I know were mortified at this, but I think it must have been the intelligent look on all faces that prompted the commentator to assume everybody was a radar operator. Cheers Ian" **Ed** – Yeah, right 'Stretch' on the last bit!! Is that why your hair is grey, stands up and you glow green of a night time?

. **Ernie Newbold made** this comment – "G'day Paul, I believe that the Zest regulars (from Sydney) would all declare that this was the best lunch get together we have had so far and that they really enjoyed the day together with the guys who came to Sydney for the day. All thanks to you and the Eyes and Ears for bringing us all closer together. Well Done Dicko!!!! Regards, Ernie."

Ed – Thanks for your thought Ernie, but by the looks of it **Vic Danko** sounds as though he deserves credit for organising the Zest function – thanks Vic!

. **Warwick Brooker really enjoyed** the day and tells us – "Dicko -- we missed you! Here are a few photos. Some might be very similar to Allen's. Use them as you wish.

This is the first time I've marched with fellow locators on Anzac Day and the first Anzac Day I've enjoyed. While Anzac Day has always been a time of reflection and commemoration for me, this one was also a great reunion event and therefore so much more enjoyable.

Thanks to...

(1) Victor for arranging a great lunch at City Tatts;

(2) Gunner Mac and Kanga for orchestrating my attendance; and

(3) All who attended and made the weekend such a memorable occasion! ...Brookey"

Ed – I've forwarded to everyone a copy of Brookey's email with photos – have a look at the Slide Show as it's bloody good. Thanks Brookey.

. **Lesley Hogn** couldn't let the Coff's Crew down and sent in the following...



Hi Dicko

This photo of **David Doyle** and **Jim** was taken on Anzac Day at the Coffs Harbour Ex Services Club.

Best wishes, Lesley

. **Bert Blink didn't** let Canberra down even though K07 or his stand-in was captured posing as Brookey in the pre-march photo in Sydney...



Hi Paul

Well Canberra turned on a cold but fine day. The day was strange as the person I normally march with didn't turn up, still trying to find out if he is OK. Vietnam Veterans are now in 18th position in the march rather than the usual 56th. Forgot to cover my ears when the three F18 Hornets flew overhead, still partly deaf.

Mary & Caroline took a few snaps. Notice how we all get to sit down during the Ceremony. Bert



. **Ron Boaler keeps us** in the loop as to what happened in Townsville on the 25th...



"Hi Paul,

Attached are photos from ANZAC Day in Townsville. All 3 that we know of past members of 131 were in attendance with family. Those appearing in the photos L to R are: **Neville Smith, Ann Pioro, Peter Pioro, Ron Boaler & son Ken Boaler.**

The rain was light but still saw the largest ever crowds both at Dawn Services and the two main parades in the area. Being a garrison city for Army, Navy and RAAF bases (where Ron and Peter finished up at the RAAF Sergeant's Mess) there were many service personnel who had just returned from overseas deployment. Peter Pioro is the Welfare Co-ordinator and Ron is the Magazine Editor for the TPI Association and the results of injury in war zones is very evident.

We welcome visitors to the north and would love to hear from members coming up this way or need information about North Queensland. Contact Ron on 0409

. **Damian McManus** made the second “Main Game” at the G in Melbourne...

	Damian's a bloke of few and very succinct words... “I Think Age Does Weary Them!!” Ed – C'mon Damian, the game hadn't started!!	
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...more for Melbourne...

. **Peter Ravlje** sent the following of the March...

		
John Delacca, Mitch Miller and Pierre Goss.	Paul Angell (Sydney), Max McPherson, Mitch Miller, Pete Ravelje (Brisbane) and Ron Mason (on edge of photo)	Group photo

. **John Vickary** sent this reflective piece on an ANZAC DAY in... “As a Vietnam Veteran, I had promised myself the pilgrimage to Gallipoli for ANZAC Day “one day” and I finally fulfilled that promise in 2007.

I arrived on the Peninsula a couple of days early and immersed myself in the atmosphere, visiting the Kabtepe Museum, North Beach, ANZAC Cove, Lone Pine Cemetery, the 57thRegiment Turkish Memorial and Chunuk Bair.

At about 0300 hrs on ANZAC Day I joined thousands of others at ANZAC Cove for the Dawn Ceremony and was immediately amazed at the congregation.

Yes, I had expected Aussies, Kiwis and Poms but nothing had prepared me for the other nationalities present and their numbers. There were Europeans from all Countries, Yanks, Canadians, Japanese and a whole lot more, all of them wanting to experience the commemoration of the event which went a long way to defining the spirit of ANZAC and indeed our National spirit.

I had cleverly (or so I thought) rugged up against the cold, but NOTHING could have prepared me for the conditions that morning.

And COLD it was! A Kiwi nearby had a small weather station with him, and cheerfully informed all and sundry that the temp was minus 3 degrees Celsius with a 20 knot wind.

My respect for those diggers, always immense, grew even deeper as I pictured them leaping off landing vessels into icy waters, laden with weapon, ammo and other kit, clad in wet, heavy woollen battle dress and trying to make it to cover under withering weapons fire from "Johnny Turk" above them in the hills.

As the fateful hour of the landing approached the entertainment trailed off and the crowd fell silent.

The ceremony was awesome, solemn and reverent, and I'll bet there wasn't a dry eye on the Peninsula as the mournful notes of the Last Post washed over us.

Following the Dawn Ceremony I joined the throng on the “walk” up the hill (more a route march really where my delusion of fitness suffered a shattering blow) for the Australian Ceremony at Lone Pine. This was more a “people's” event, with a strong element of comradeship and just a little fun (despite the efforts of the “fun police” who threatened expulsion for anyone who “misbehaved”)

I came away from the pilgrimage with a number of impressions:

1) That the spirit of ANZAC is alive and well, and is the envy of every other Nation in the world.

2) That the Turks are such amazing people. They allow us – the former enemy – to take over some of their Sovereign territory to commemorate this event. Their hospitality, generosity, friendliness and above all their forgiveness should be a lesson for us all.

Indeed I am brought to tears every time I read the following tribute to the ANZACS paid by a Turkish Officer Colonel Mustafa Kemal at Gallipoli who as Ataturk went on to found the modern nation of Turkey as we know it today:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lay side by side now here in this country of ours... you, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land. They have become our sons as well.

I defy anyone with a shred of feeling to remain dry-eyed at that!

3) That we are correct in honouring our ANZACS, and indeed all service veterans.

JV or Vick as my 131 cohort knew me (John Vickary)”

. Memories –

Dickson, Paul – SVN 1967

It was a late Sunday afternoon when Tony Goldsmith and I were returning from a bit of a session up at 31A, discussing religion and politics with those layabout SAS lot, when we spotted an Asian Cobra on the path (which wasn't bad after 2 beers), so unwisely we decided it might make a decent trophy – I'm not sure how or why we decided on that. Tony volunteered to stand on it supposedly with one foot behind the head which I was to massage with a stone. With me belting the crap out of Tony's foot and occasionally hitting the target and the snake's tail wrapping around his other leg it finally gave in and carked it – the snake not Tony. No we didn't take it back as a trophy (not a pretty sight), but threw it into the scrub and hobbled (well Tony did) back to Arty Tac lines having killed some poor bloody snake minding its own business.”

. Locating Artillery Assoc....notes taken from their website –

- Committee meetings are held regularly at Paddington RSL commencing at 1115 hrs. The next Committee Meeting will be on 16 May 2010 and Members are cordially invited to attend. More details will be available in the next issue of the *Associations* Newsletter LOCREP.
- Work parties at the RAA National Museum are normally held on the last Sunday of each month. All future dates will be confirmed in the *Associations* Newsletter. The next work party is on 30 May. Work parties commence at 1000 hrs sharp in the Locating Hangar and conclude with an *Association*-funded BBQ at 1400 hrs at the North Fort Mess.

. Birthdays in the Battery...April...21 blokes cracked it for a birthday card this month!! Let's kick the month off with Des Spencer making an interesting “day” his on the 1st, then Kevin Maker snuck in on the 4th followed John “Kanga” McFadden and **David Martin** on 7th, **Richard Bristow** came on the 8th just before **Michael McDonnell** and **Terry Fox** on 11th, the late Ron Royal shares the 19th with **Peter Clarke**, Barry Campton claims 22nd, then **Murray Smale** on 23rd, **Johannes Las** on 24th, **Quentin Knight** 25th, then Grahame Dignam made it a quinella with **William Crowther** on 26th, **Gerald Young** had the 27th to himself, then we end up with a quadrella of **Ron Mason**, **Kevin Thornton**, **Bernie Erica** and **Peter Fuhrmann** just got there on the 29th.
Ed – the 12 blokes (in bold) still need to be found before whenever!

. Locator Profiles – we've received 37 and we've sent out 34... **Ed** Thanks fellas and keep 'em coming.

Just an up-date on our Group – we've discovered 130 blokes and have 123 that are on our email list – that's a far cry from the 13 we had in March 2009!

. Lost, found...

.Vale – Richard Newell Wickenden...



The Last Post

**19945, Maj Wickenden,
Richard Newell
131 Divisional Locating Battery
Bty Cmd - 1974
1 Fd Regt RAA – SVN 1969-70
06.09.40 – 06.04.10**

Lest We Forget

Richard Newell WICKENDEN, Major - 19945 - served in South Vietnam with 1st Field Regiment from 04.03.1969 to 11.03.1970, with the rank of (Temporary) Captain. He is listed as being Battery Commander of 131 Div. Loc. Bty. R.A.A. in 1974. He was born at Casino N.S.W.

...**David Troedel** adds this bit of histrionics...

"Hi Paul, I am researching the service details of the members that served with 101 Fd Bty in Malaya from 4th October 1959 to 29th October 1961.

Dick Wickenden enlisted RASR-O (Regt No 1410374) in Feb 1958. He transferred to the ARA (19945) in Malaya so he could complete the tour.

He was the youngest member of the Battery to sail on the Flaminia on 18th September 1959, arriving in Penang on 4th October 1959. Dick was posted as a Sig in the Delta Troop Line Party, and returned by plane on 1st October 1961 with his family as only the single members returned on the Flaminia. I think that he returned to Wacol and served with 101 Bty, 4 Fd Regt. but cannot be sure.

Other details of service from EOM are 2Lt 63.4 Fd 63. 'C' Tp 130 Gun Loc Bty 66. Lt 66. T/Capt 67. Adj 1 Fd 67-69. SVN as you listed.

Capt & Bk 102 Bty 73. Maj SO2 c79. ARES. Maj DSG NQ c90.

I know that Dick was the BC 131 Div Loc Bty as I was at the 20 STA parade, but do not know dates.

It was a shock to hear of his passing as last September he attended our 50th Anniversary in Coffs Harbour.

Regards, David Troedel - 101 Field Battery, Malaya 1959-1961."

...then **David Troedel** added after **Ed** added a query about Richard's Regt no..."Paul, 1410374 was his RASR-O number, he joined the Army for 3 years in February 1958. I don't know when he transferred to the ARA (19945) could have been in Malaya as quite a few RASR-O members transferred to the ARA when they had to re-enlist to complete their tour. David"

... **Barry Guzder** adds his memories – "Dicko, Re Captain Wickenden as I knew him, a wonderful officer (and I didn't like many of them) and I for one am very sad at his passing. He was very lenient to me when I did things I shouldn't. God bless him. You can send this reply out to all other ranks. Regards Barry Guzder 5714500."

...then here's some good news...

. **John Lochore** sent this in - Hello Paul - thank you for your note. Yes, you sent me 'E & E' to this address, and I read it with interest. From your email list with that I saw Kevin's (Kevin Browning) email address. So I contacted him as one who might remember me.

I would be pleased to be included in the group, and receive emails, etc.

Just leaving now to 'go down south' - the country south from Perth - grandchildren, etc.

Best wishes, John (Lochore, that once was Lahore)

. **George Lane** discovered **William Crowther (aka Dave)** and after an email from **Ed, Dave** got back with this – "Paul, Thank you for your e-mail. I was the radar Bdr on Alpha radar and went with the advance party in 1966. My first name is William k/a Dave Kind regards and enjoy tomorrow. dc"...then he added another email – "Paul, just read your march edition. Very interesting. **Don Simmons** mentioned on page 8. I served with Don as per my last email. Have fwd att. to him. He will probably contact you in the near future. Kind regards dc"

. **Dave Crowther** is one not to be outdone and got us in touch with **Don Simmons** who responded with this – "Hi Paul, Please inform Charles Brewer that I am on the Central Coast but am about to take off around Oz camping for twelve months.

Secondly, please inform David Cornell that I was in charge of radar when he joined the detachment. But he is in error, we were not between 105 Bty and the Engineers but rather it was 103 Bty. David Crowther was my 2 i/c.

I was a foundation member of 103 Bty as a Gunner TARA when it was formed at Wacol Qld in 59 / 60 prior to going to Malay with Capt (later Maj VC) Peter Badco as Bty Capt.

I can be reached via David Crowther. Regards Don Simmons"

Then can we find...

. **Brian Kennedy – Ed** extracted the following from LAA's Locrep to see whether or not we may be able to help – "Does anyone know the whereabouts or contact details of **Capt Brian Kennedy** who was the OC Det 131 Locating Bty in SVN from Aug 69 to Aug 70.

Arthur Burke has advised that a number of Capt Kennedy's OCS class mates from 1962 are trying to locate him.

Brian served with 3 RAR from March 65 to November 65 and Det 131 Div Loc Bty from August 69 to August 1970.

If anyone can help in locating Brian with a view to him re-establishing contact with his OCS class mates would you please advise his details to Arthur Burke via email at mailto: arthurburke@bigpond.com_or to three-zero@hotmail.com

Any assistance will be gratefully appreciated."

Quotable quote...

"Where a goat can go, a man can go; where a man can go, he can drag a gun."

*Colonel William Phillips**

*William Phillips would be involved in one of the first dramatic incidents of the American Civil War when, as a Colonel on the staff of Governor Brown, he accompanied Governor Brown to Augusta on January 23rd 1861 to demand the surrender of the United States Arsenal located there. The arsenal contained a battery of artillery, 20000 stands of muskets and a large quantity of munitions and was guarded by a detachment of eighty Federal troops under command of Captain Arnold Elzey. Governor Brown requested Elzey to take his men and leave the state but Elzey refused and telegraphed Washington for instructions. Governor Brown called on 800 state militia in Augusta to prepare to take the arsenal by force. These troops were soon joined by several hundred additional troops from Burke County and Edgefield, SC. In the meantime Captain Elzey received instructions from his superiors to surrender the arsenal, but only if this could be done under honourable terms. Governor Brown, Colonel Lawton, Colonel Phillips and Colonel Walker met with Captain Elzey to arrange for the surrender. Not long afterwards, Elzey would resign his Federal commission and become a Confederate hero at the battle of First Manassas.

. One more of Henry's to finish off with...



Editor contact email: three-zero@hotmail.com Ed – Paul 'Dicko' Dickson