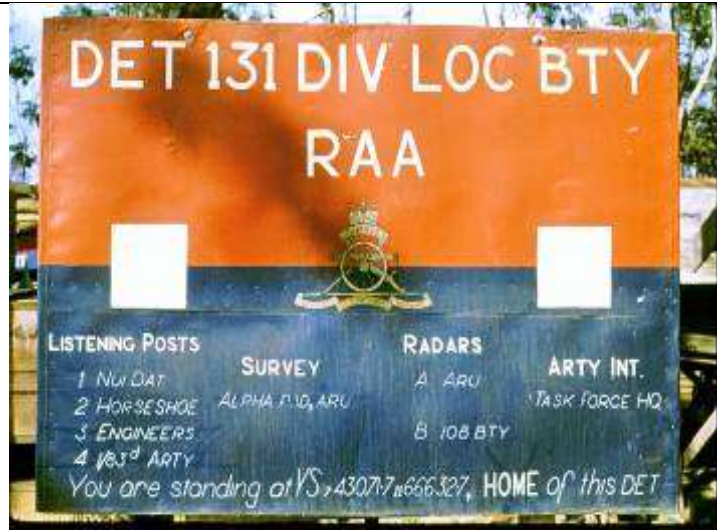




THE EYES and EARS

No.0019 – 25/05/10

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



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

Official sources in NSW are noting changes to be made to the State's Road Systems to take place in June this year. Because of road deterioration and excessive fuel use, the system of "odd and even" calendar days, "odd and even" registration plates and the closing down of half lanes on multi-lane highways and major roads will take place with one-way traffic flow. This will mean that if you are driving on, let's say, the 11th day of the month in a vehicle that's registration ends in an even number, you will only be allowed to drive in a northerly direction in the morning. This rule does NOT affect secondary roads or if you are traversing the from, say the north-north east to south-south west or anti-clockwise around the State. The other States and Territories can't wait to see the outcome and eagerly trying to book seats at the first ever public hanging of a State official! Well, at least it'll create some interest in NSW and be a tourism boost!

Heard and seen...

. **Allen Morley has** a request to locate a mate...

"Another search request in E&E please, although the outcome is known. The late Geoff Wood was a good mate. Ken Mc told me at lunch that he used to drop Geoff off on the way home to Cronulla when we were based at Holsworthy. I know he was in radar – too intelligent to be a surveyor? But I am not sure if he was Alpha or Bravo. He went to Nui Dat on May 5 with Ernie, myself, Ken Long, Roger Long etc and returned in December 1967. I kept in touch; and then he married an Egyptian girl and then our contact disappeared. I tried to contact Geoff for our 4th intake 40th anniversary year march but he had died at the tender age of 62. I have not seen any photos of Geoff in E&E nor the profiles. Geoff had a daughter who might be interested in the 131 story. Allen. Can you put out a request please?" **Ed** – consider it done.

. **Lee Leplaw Deichmann replied** after we sent her some info on her Dad, **Garry** – "Hi Paul,

Thanks so much for all that you have sent so far. My husband especially is engrossed in reading the book extract you have forwarded, and it was wonderful to see the picture of dad that one of your readers had sent in. He really did have a young face! And amazingly in that picture looks like an exact 50/50 blend of both of my brothers!

I look forward to hearing about any more stories that come through and would just like to thank you again for the huge effort you have made for me! Sincerely Lee"

. **Charles Brewer got** in contact with – "Hullo Paul – Charles Brewer here, ex 7 FD REGT at Willoughby and Dee Why, and 133 DIV LOC Belmore; had the RDR/Recruiting Sec Cmdrs cap there.

Really appreciate what you have done with the Roll of Honour. Because I was ARES (for some 23 yrs) most of these Soldiers are unknown to me; however, the service they rendered is still honoured, and especially for those who gave their young lives in SVN. Ubique. Chb."

...then followed up with...

"Paul, Charles again. Amazing – how could our Press be so exclusive of the death toll from Balmoral and Coral? At 7 FD REGT some time after this, we did an annual camp at Ingleburn with the members of 12 FD REGT – had a great combined SGTS Mess. The history that they had been involved in just seemed to be "swept under the carpet". What would be the reaction today?

So pleased that you and others have taken the time to put all this together.

Don't stop! I remember well the very high quality for the AIG's we had – all returned from SVN, and now promoted to WO2 – they deserved it! Peter Tillbrook, Bulla MacDonald BSM A BTY, and others come to mind. I'll think of others and send those names through. What about Don Simmons of 131 Bty?

Anyway – push on, as Gunners always have. Chb."

. **Wayne Jeffery sent** in a quick response to Ken McNamara's Profile, proving its small world – “Worked with this bloke at the Register Generals Office regards, Wayne”

. **Warwick Hamilton surfaces** from some third world country in Europe to add some well founded comments on some recent articles – “Hi Paul, a couple of things from the last edition of E & E:
Cans of beer on ops. The rules said quite categorically that this was NOT allowed...however... occasionally there were additional 'special rations' sent forward. Just don't ask how this was arranged or who paid!
 I'm sure the 'in base' ration was supposed to be 2 cans per day.
 One incident which made me irate at the time but was actually funny was that for one of the ops (can't remember which), as a treat for terrible conditions I think, I arranged 'at great expense' for our friendly Yanks to deliver fresh meals to a FSB by chopper. The chopper dropped off a pallet which sat in the heat for quite a while then, when things were quiet, it was unpacked to discover they had delivered 1100 lbs of fresh ice cream, which had of course by then had melted into slush.
 The best laid plans etc...
 On Warwick Brooker's memories of requests to extend the tours of some people – Yes, I tried to keep some people who were being returned early because of the need to retain their expertise and experience. To send them home early was illogical. Yes they were all asked to volunteer to stay, and I think everyone did agree. Despite several extremely well worded signals (well I thought so anyway) Canberra flatly refused the request, and I cannot remember if there was a reason given. Had there been a logical reason provided I'm sure I would have explained this to everyone; after all it was a big and serious ask for people to stay on.
 Sorry I can't be more definitive than that but as you know I don't have my diaries of that time with me.
 It was great to see such a good roll up everywhere for Anzac Day. John Vickary's piece from Gallipoli was very good. It is a most moving place, even not on Anzac Day.
 All the best from Bilbao, Warwick”

. **Ernie Newbold can't** reveal the source of the photo on the left below as it came to him via one of his “contacts”; however he has bravely passed it on as it needs airing as it again raises the questions about this similarity and the mystery of Brookey and “K07”...

Coincidence? I don't think so... 	This uncanny similarity intrigue was initially uncovered in the Eyes & Ears 0011 October, 2009 edition. Now the makers of Milky Bar with the “Milky Bar Kid” have added to this question which won't go away. What are K07 and Brookey up to? Enough is enough – Brookey don't be afraid of Theresa! Did Brookey attend the Nuclear Conference at DC in April? (Canberra remains tight-lipped and Brookey's not saying much either).	
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. **Keith Ayliffe sends** in a bit of a “What the...?”

 No3 Mk7's Nth Head 1973			
3 Mk 7 Radar here they were at the school in 73	the 3 Mk VII radar as a mortar locating radar then a met radar 1950 to Late1975 (132 Bty Victoria Circa 1966)	The AN/KPQ-1 (1964 to 1984	TPQ - 36 Weapon Locating Radar Still in service (Updated Version)

Ed – ah #3! That's the one I remember. Great to hang socks off if pointed in the right direction!

. National Service Memorial Project Dedication Day - Wednesday, September 8, 2010.

The dates for the Dedication events have now been confirmed for September 7 and 8, 2010 with the dedication of the National Servicemen's Memorial scheduled for **Wednesday, September 8, 2010**.

Immediate family members (ie. mother, father, brother, sister, wife, son or daughter) of the 212 deceased National Servicemen interested in attending the dedication should click on the link provided below and print/complete the **Expression of Interest form and return to the National Secretary at the address provided on the form**.

For general National Servicemen interested in participating in dedication events, a link to a Servicemen's Expression of Interest form is provided below. **This form should be completed and returned to the National Secretary at the address provided on the form.**

Website link: <http://www.nashoaustralia.org.au/memorial.htm> Bob

It is suggested that you start to make plans to attend very smartly as it is going to be very popular event and accommodation and transport are going to be at a premium. It also is a good time to start to organise mates etc to meet there – accommodation/meeting places etc.

Ed - This isn't just for Vietnam Nasho's!

. A simple email leads to this – “What did Happen on the Way to SVN”...

Ernie Newbold starts it off with...“May the fourth be with you!...”

On Tue May 4 9:59, "Ernest Newbold" sent:

“G'day all,

I'm sure that you will all remember where you were on this day in 1967.

Being a part of a contingent of forty locators to set foot in Vung Tau, South Vietnam so long ago and now with so many memories and friends to share them with.

Lest we forget.

On Star Wars Day each year, May the fourth be with you.

Regards, Ernie.”

Ed – couldn't help myself and had to reply...

“Hey you've got me enthralled, as best as I can gather, we all left on the same day, on the same transport, and going to the same destination, but for some reason we have some different stories?

At least Dig now has got the Ansett-ANA DC6B identified and at least his Mum and Dad were there to say goodbye (see photos below), but it gets a bit confusing after that, so can I ask a couple of questions that may smooth things out ...

Let's give this a crack at these -

.Can you please reply with your version/s of events as to the best of your memory?

.Do you remember if anyone saw you off - photos would be devastating? I don't think we need to know what you were wearing, but details of whatever will do.

.Did you stop on the way - if so where? Where did you sleep?

.What sort of aircraft/s were you on after the Ansett/ANA DC6B out of Sydney? We don't need the crew's names.

.Where did you spend the first night in SVN?

.How much later was it until you went to your first location? ie. LP etc

.A yarn please - bullet points will suffice.

...then the replies came thick and fast...

Grahame Dignam – is the first to start clearing things up with indisputable evidence...

“Well, here's the evidence

Regards Dig



Allen Morley at Mascot with a few others. Hadn't Twiggy arrived with the “mini”?

Grahame Dignam with his Dad, Mum and brother David (Elvis impersonator – Dig's words not Ed's

One of Reg's finest – DC6B with lounge and drinks table!

and **Dig** then adds with "bullet points"...

- . Farewell party consisted of Mum Dad Marlene (sister) David (brother) and Aunt?
- . Last Aussie treat was a chocolate Milkshake in a waxed paper container (don't know why I remember that)
- . Dc6b to Darwin, o/Nite in barracks (very humid) into Herc for Vung Tau.
- . I recall a nervous trip via open back truck convoy from Vungers to Nui Dat because I had a L1A1 but no ammo (I think)
- . The pic above I think was very early on in the tour and could have been "First Night" in what was Survey lines.
- . I reckon I stayed there for about 2/3 weeks because I remember building the shower area and the Surveyors erecting and Bagging the tents and also planning the concrete footpath.
- . I then moved to Arty Tac area. Regards, Grahame"

Ernie -

'G'day Paul,

Before you go too far with the unfolding story, spare a thought for all the other guys who were on that overseas trip of a lifetime. When I sent out the original "May the fourth" message I only sent it to the people who were in my email address book.

Here is the list of names as shown in "Tracks of the Dragon" whose SVN service commenced on the 4th of May 1967.

Ken McNamara, Allan Adams, John Blake, Warwick Brooker, Terry Bruce, Michael Campbell, Joe Clendinen *, Victor Danko, Paul Dickson, Grahame Dignam, Tony Dodds*, Ted Doust*, Ron Evans, Peter Fletcher, Peter Gault, Tony Goldsmith, Greg Green, Ross Gunnell, Leigh Hemming, Peter Hopper, Frank Ipsa, Bruce Irvine, Mick King*, Ken Long, Roger McDonnell, John McFadden, Allen Morley, Ernest Newbold, Lionel Outen, Murray Poustie, Nick Proskurin, Ron Saunders*, Stuart Sporn, John Vickary, Max Troynar, Trevor Waghorn*, Ron Webb, Hans Weber, Geoff Wood, Ian Yerbury*.

* indicates Australian Regular Army all of the remainder were National Servicemen.

And two more whose arrival date is shown as 5th May 1967 but may have possibly been with the main group are Michael Habben and Bob Retrot.

You may wish to include any of the above who are in your mail address book and not already in the picture.

Regards, Ernie.'

Ed – as requested I did just that.

Allen M -

"Hi Ernie it's a useful reminder, now I have a slight quibble and am 'taking the fifth' as the Yanks say.

Firstly I don't want to be too much of a pedant ... but didn't we leave Mascot on that Ansett flight on May 4th, overnight in Darwin then arrive in Vung Tau via Hercules on May 5th?

One day in 43 years - 15,705 days including leap years - represents about 00079% difference, which is bugger all. And 5 is a prime number! So I will concede victory to you, thus the fourth is still with you.

Best wishes Allen "

Vic Danko -

"Ok, I'll throw in my recollections. We left from Holsworthy. Before departing I went and cut a few rose clippings which I intended to plant in Nui Dat. I wrapped them in a hessian bag and made a carry handle out of a coat-hanger. I wet the hessian thoroughly. We left by Ansett for Darwin. Dickson called these rose clippings our "war of the roses". I knew it was something in history but I was never interested in history.

All I remember about the flight to Darwin is that at the rear of the aircraft there was a place where people could sit around a table. I remember seeing Hemming sitting there.

In Darwin we went to barracks and I went into the ablution block and left the rose clipping in a sink over night. Next morning we departed by Hercules with webbing for seating. I remember at one time I found a bunk type resting place and slept for much of the journey."

I do recall vividly flying over the Celebes Islands and they looked just like in the atlas (fancy that!) –

ED – actually **Grahame Dignam** has a photo of islands.

"We landed in Vung Tau. We slept the night in tents near the airport and then the next day to Nui dat.

The rose clippings, which I had tendered all the way, I gave to one of our guys to plant near Arty Tac. But I don't remember who it was. Maybe it was Pete Fletcher and maybe Peter told me later they didn't take.

Given that today there is no evidence of our stay at Nui dat it would have been good if the Roses had taken life.

Regards Vic "

Ernie

"G'day Allen,

It is good to have someone with a good memory to check up on things.

The Army records show that we served in South Vietnam from the 4th May and as we actually departed from Australian soil on the same day I presumed that we must have flown from Sydney to Darwin on the 3rd May (the day before Star wars day) I am not sure if the Army (D.V.A.) counts our service from the day we depart from Australia or the day we arrived "in country" and the same for coming home.

However as we arrived "in country" on the same day as we departed from Australia I guess that it doesn't make much difference for us going over. Our return to Australia was the day after we departed Saigon so there could be one day difference there. Regards, Ernie."

Allen M

"Hi Ernie

You ascribe to me a memory that I don't have. However, what I do have is a pic of departure from Mascot – taken by Geoff Wood's dad, which is dated 4th May and in his hand writing. It is one of the pics in my profile.

I remember that it was DC6 to Darwin then a C130 to Vung Tau. I have no recollection at all – an addled brain – of how we got to Nui Dat although I know from discussion with you that it was by Caribou. I don't think I stayed overnight in Vungers, but bow to the memories of others.

I remember some time ago a comment from Keith Ayliffe/John Posener regarding the accuracy of dates in and out of SVN. Dicko, I seem to recall one of the E&Es raised the matter. I was just glad to get out and cannot understand how Brookie and a few other supposedly sane Nashos volunteered to stay on.

And Victor's fucking roses. How the hell did they get into the debate?

The point is Ernie I appreciate the reminder. It was all so long ago, when my waistline was less, my hair present and darker in colour and people wanted to shoot at me. Cheers Allen (Gnr Retd)"

Vic

"Thanks all,

"Rose horticulturalist" - Does anyone remember me carrying the clippings?

From Vung Tau to Nui Dat we travelled by trucks. Remember the bridge that was half submerged? (we didn't have to use it; it was off to the left heading north.

Yes we slept in tents in Vung Tau and next day to Nui Dat. I remember vividly lying there in the tent in Vung Tau and thinking "right now there is no one I know who has the vaguest idea of where I am, not even my mother!"

Now a separate note, sorry about this but I'm reading a book which is very close to what happened to my parents in Russia WW2.

In 1966 we were all plus or minus 20yrs of age. Our fathers and mothers had been thru WW2. How tough must it have been for them? We'll never know.

Like many, my father was not one for demonstration (and I didn't like him very much) but I still remember that at the end of that pre-embarkation leave (I came home) he came into my bedroom early, he was off to work, woke me, shook my hand and left. Not a word.

The guy had his issues, he was a Cossack, Nazis and Soviets, .But the older I get the more I understand (almost).

Regards Vic"

...OK, Ed did a bit of digging and came up with some info on the "roses" in E&E's that were published in 1967 (thanks to **Warwick Brooker** for sending them to me) which shine some light on this subject...

Bereavement Notice.

The writers and staff extend their deepest sympathy to the O.C. upon the death of the rosebud "Cleo". "Cleo", aged 3 months, died as a result of squeezing by some evil sadist. The O.C. could'nt be contacted to-day for comment and his ADC Pete Fletcher is reported to be under heavy sedation

...and then this piece...

GRASS GALORE

There's no chance of the REC areas' lawn being washed away or growing unnoticed, as WO2 "Chalkie" is doing a fine job of keeping it under surveillance. So great is the attraction of the grass that it had both he and the OC (on all fours), sniffing at it during the week.

cont.

-2-

GRASS GALORE. cont

This just goes to show that the horticultural spirit of the Battery didn't die with the roses.

...sorry about the quality of the print but it was run off an army Gestetner in '67 and my typing and spelling hasn't improved with time either, but the story does lay testament to the existence and short life of the Vic Danko's Roses.

Allen

"Hi Guys

Paul, you put an excellent case. If someone ex 131 does not want to be involved in what is being done that is their decision. Some 25% on the 131 list at this stage is unexpected but delightful. Your summary was a great demonstration of something about sleeping dogs. If people don't bother putting in then they do not have any inherent rights. Res Ipsa loquitur (one for you Kanga – and nothing to do with Frank of the same name!).

This debate started in a small sub-group and probably should remain there. We have to be careful of not being seen to be a mob of old grouches. I think it is a great tale in its own right. Grahame's photos suggest that the Ansett DC6's handbrake was left off, so maybe Dig was at work 43 years ago today.

My recommendation is that we accept our own collective, but faded memories, and go with the majority - Rose horticulturalists too.

Ernie, all you tried to do was to remind us of an important date. And I know that I did not walk from Vung Tau to Nui Dat. The rest probably does not really matter much.

Night one for me was on an uncomfortable sleep on a couple of air mattresses on a stretcher in a sand bagged tent. But, certainly that was better than the grunts had out in the bush. And I nearly shat myself when the first volley from 1st 83rd went off.

That's my thoughts fellas. Allen (Gnr ret'd)"

Ernie

"G'day Paul,

Thanks for coming back from wherever you were last night (your time). It is good to hear from you again.

The list of names of those people (all reinforcements at that time) who commenced service in SVN on the 4th May 1967 reminded me of all the others who were there on that flight. I was pondering on what their thoughts might have been as we shared the experience of going to war for the very first time. Forty different people, how many different thoughts and how many with the same thoughts as we left Australia for Vietnam? Being tough, young, well trained bronzed Aussies (or so we thought then) we were unlikely to share our real thoughts and emotions with one another at that time. Looking back at those names as I wrote them down I found I could remember the faces of most of them.

I thought that the list of names might help the memories of those in this group.

As you have pointed out some of them are no longer with us, some of them I have not seen since that day and yet we all shared the same experience.

The memories of those in our group seem to be varied and mixed as to where we stayed and when we actually arrived at Nui Dat. Perhaps we didn't all travel together all the way after arriving in Vung Tau, possibly due to transport availability. The memory of sunken bridges and rose cuttings are still very clear in some people's minds and yet parts of that trip are hazy and incomplete in other places.

I can clearly remember disembarking from the RAAF C130 Hercules and standing on the duck boarded surface and the heat and strong sunlight that awaited us there. The next thing that I can clearly recall is being in the Task Force area at Nui Dat so I can't recall any credible memories of how I travelled from Vung Tau to Nui Dat. Regards, Ernie"

Ernie

"G'day Allen,

Ah yes, Victor's roses. The amazing things that pop up from our memory banks from time to time.

It really is amazing what things are hidden away in our memory only to return unexpectedly when someone says something (a word or a name) that brings it back so clearly. That is something that I have found over the years, particularly when we get together on days such as Anzac Day.

I can't remember clearly whether we went from Vung Tau by road or air but suspect that it must have been in a Caribou (with the back door open all the way). I am sure that I went from Vung Tau to

Nui Dat without an overnight stop over in Vung Tau as it was mid to late afternoon when we arrived in Nui Dat.

Do you remember your first night at Nui Dat, the sound of mortars and artillery firing all night. Or how many nights it took to be able to ignore it all and sleep through fire missions etc.

I do remember the Ansett DC6 that took us to Darwin; it was a DC6B, the model with rectangular windows rather than the round portholes of the earlier model.

Regards, Ernie.'

. Murray Poustie and Peter Hopper both sent in the departure from Sydney photo below and Murray went one better showing the arrival...

Murray

"Paul,

We did fly Ansett DC6B to Darwin where we stayed overnight at the RAAF Base before leaving the next day on a Hercules for Vung Tau. At Vung Tau we were met and then flew to Nui Dat by Caribou.

Photos attached to prove it

Regards Murray

...then Peter Hopper adds more proof by sending the same photo as Murray (above)

"Paul

Please find attached a photo that was taken on 4th May 1967 showing members of 131 Div Loc Bty on their way to Vietnam.

From left to right we have : Brooker, Webb, Hopper and McFadden. It was taken by Bdr Murray Poustie.

Peter Hopper"



Paul,
We did fly Ansett-ANA DC6B to Darwin where we stayed overnight at the RAAF Base before leaving the next day on a Hercules for Vung Tau. At Vung Tau we were met and then flew to Nui Dat by Caribou. Photos attached to prove it.
Regards Murray
Left: Brooker, Webb, Hopper and McFadden.
Right: Warwick Hamilton (no tie – just back from the “solarium”) and Ian Yerbury.



Ed – as a footnote to above photo - “Right: Warwick Hamilton (no tie – just back from the “solarium”) and Ian Yerbury.” – Warwick did send an email saying that the tie must have been hanging with his shirt – likely story!

. Stuart Sporn

“Hey Dicko !!

I remember it well. Think it was 4/5/67 we left from Sydney in the 6B arriving in Darwin just after Dark.

My wife and parents were in Sydney to see me off.

As we approached Darwin a senior NCO (WO I think) came down the aisle bellowing my name. After identification the NCO advised that my sister was at the airport to meet me. (This seemed odd as I don't have one)

Went along with it and turned out to be a Sheila and her husband who lived next door to me in the Alice. After doing the usual greetings with “Sis” the NCO said I could stop with “Sis” overnight but if I failed to board 7am the following morning he would track me down and reconfigure my reproductive equipment.

I think everyone else stopped at RAAF Darwin and I was the sole person who didn't.

In retrospect it was the worst decision I ever made

Stopped at Elaine's father's house a few minutes from the airport (Ted Styles was his name and he pioneered refrigerated road trains in the NT)

What a night on the slops and got little or no sleep

After boarding a Herc for Vung Tau for 8 hours or so all I wanted to do is piss all the way and that's not easy on the Herc.

After Vungers we Caribou-ed it to Nui Dat and think we stopped at least the first night in the Alpha Radar lines

Can't remember how long there until we shifted to Bravo

I do remember Ted Doust at Alpha sitting on an ammo box in shorts with a pendulous testicle hanging out right next to the “9mm ball” description. Someone took a photo but can't remember who

Cheers Stuart”

.Warwick Brooker

“Dicko, was it 5 May or 4 May (the recorded date)? I was on that DC6B to Darwin and had forgotten the exact date until I referred to the recorded date - 4 May 1967. Brookey’ **Ed** – there's a photo above to prove it!

. **Paul Dickson** – (first published in the E&E's 0005 May 2009) – 12 months ago.

“I had some thoughts on the rear cargo doors of the Hercules opening at Vung Tau for the first time, on arrival from Darwin, and seeing little people dressed in ‘black pj's and coolie hats’ standing there and my SLR somewhere below me and God knows where the bolt was, let alone any ammo! I was sure, at the time, that I was told to do something when I saw people dressed like this (I'm sure I saw photos of them) and what to do if the occasion arose! What else did they tell me or forget to tell me that was not quite right and was I really paying attention? Maybe I should have paid more and flown with another airline as the food, seating and service on board were terrible as well! Not to mention that there was no booze being served!”

. Bruce Irvine -

“Hi Paul, Finally stirred me out of my wombat hole!

Following Grahame Dignam's photo, thought I might be able to contribute to your request for 4 -5th May 1968.

I have clear recollections of some of those days thanks to my dating and writing on all my slides of that early part of my tour in SVN. Other recollections are not so clear.

I have always said we flew to Darwin on a DC6B a reflection of which can be seen in the first photo. My memory of the flight is that we drank the plane dry before we got anywhere near the red centre (or am I dreaming that we did!!). I do recall waking before arriving in Darwin feeling a bit off and stuffy. I put it down to the fact that I was at the back of the aircraft and coping all the stale air back there. Also (and here I may stand corrected) the seating there was a curved lounge around the rear of the cabin (like a lounge at the rear of the aircraft). Probably dreaming again!!

Arriving in Darwin was like stepping off the plane into an oven and we slept that night in RAAF quarters (bunk style) under mossie nets and on top of the sheets because it was so bloody hot.

Next morning we boarded a RAAF Hercules for the flight to Vung Tau. We were seated in luxury leather first class recliner lounges with personal headphones to listen to the latest music releases during the flight. Now I know I'm dreaming!!

Aluminium and canvas bench seats along the sides of the plane with ear plugs stuffed in our ears to soften the engine

noise (so that's where the tinnitus started). Any lounging we did was on top of our luggage and supplies crammed into the middle of the plane.

Getting of the Herc was again like stepping into another oven - only this time hotter. Photos tell the story of our changeover to the Caribou and flight to Nui dat.

First night sleep – I've no idea. However, the photo of Peter Hopper and Kanga McFadden tell the story of where we WERE to live. No tents - build your own. And we did. It was just another day in the multi-task role of the Artillery Surveyor in Vietnam. Did the other sections of the unit build their own quarters?? I often wondered.

All the best Dicko – you're doing a great job. Will see if I can find a photo of my first car too - an old FJ that finished up as a target on Holdsworthy range - another story! Bruce Irvine”

Attaching some photos of the forward journey (reduced size so can send full images if that helps). The following is a transcript of what is on each photo (no idea what order they will appear in the email!).

			
4 th May 1967 Departure Mascot	5 th May 1967 Cockpit of Hercules	5 th May 1967 East wing of Hercules 22,000 ft over the Celebes	5 th May 1967 - Dawn Darwin Air Base - Destination –Vung Tau. Time – 6.30 AM
			
5 th May 1967 - Arrival Vung Tau Air Base. First view of Vietnam.	5 th May 1967 - Unloading the Hercules in Vung Tau	5 th May 1967 - Here at last. Unloading the Caribou at Luscombe Airstrip in Nui Dat. Looking West.	5 th May 1967 Pete & Kanga. 1 st afternoon view S-W towards Vung Tau. Boundary of Task Force Area 150 yards South in slight gully short of the rise in the distance. Marked by rows of steel pickets.

...then John “Kanga” McFadden adds some very meaningful thoughts...

“The Airport”

“A raggedy little group of 131, with green and blue stripes painted on their gear, waited to board the plane. There were a few relatives to farewell their boys, each covering up the worry that chewed at them. I was thankful my “farewells” were long gone.

Good humour, small talk, handshakes and kisses held back the scream of “why the hell is my son being sent to a war”! Right here was the raw face of conscription!

This little group is a part payment for the posturings of politicians!

I looked at my mates; there were no malingerers here, just decent, honest people complying with a grubby, bullying law. I struggled to find a plausible reason why we should be in this position.

This wasn't a bloody movie; we're going to be shot at!

We're having our necks put on the line for what?

What was this incredible danger that threatened our shore?

This “terror” that dragged us from our jobs to fight?

This “horror” that the public barely knew about?

According to politicians it was “Japs on the doorstep” stuff yet I saw no fear or hysteria in the public.

They weren't filled with dread and most grateful we were filling the breach!

If anything, they were embarrassed with our lot.

To them it was football as usual!

The only people worried and filled with dread were the families here, dealing with the reality of conscription."

Ed – thanks Kanga, when something needs to be said, just say it.

Ed's final comments on this – thank God 1967 was a relatively quiet year in SVN with us there!!

. **Ed** – couldn't resist the following out of News Ltd...

"Pregnant Aussie troops sent home

06:21 AEST Sat May 22 2010

Four female Australian soldiers have been sent home from the Middle East after falling pregnant on deployment.

All female soldiers are pregnancy tested before they leave Australia and fraternisation is banned on operations, but that didn't stop the four from finding a way to conceive, News Ltd says.

The Australian Defence Force says all troops on overseas duty are counselled about safe sex and contraception before they leave Australia, and they will be doubly reminded of those principles in future.

The Defence Force did not say if any of the pregnancies had actually occurred on operations.

A Defence spokesman said condoms and contraceptive pills are available free of charge from medical staff, and female troops are advised to carry enough pills to last them for their entire overseas posting.

As soon as pregnancy is detected in a woman in uniform she's removed from the conflict zone.

"Upon discovery that an ADF servicewoman is pregnant whilst on operations, she is returned to Australia as soon as practicable in an attempt to protect the pregnancy," the spokesman said.

There are about 220 women serving in the Middle East at present alongside 2100 men."

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

. **Chris Chapple** -

'Mate, I am sorry that with my business I am a bit stretched out with emails so tend to be a bit hard to engage at times.

All I remember doing is getting a Holden sedan from somewhere and doing the bare essentials to get it registered and going. I do not recall how I got rid of it, possibly just gifted it to the Holdsworthy barracks car park! Chris'

. **Geoff Blackwell** –

'Hi Dicko, Yes I remember my wheels at Holsworthy. No hoon cars for me, I had a Fiat 2100. It was a smooth machine, well ahead of the pack as far as engineering and luxury went in the 1960's. On many a weekend we would cram it full of the troops and attack the Canopus room at Manly, and other places.

I remember one weekend we went on a pub crawl from Holsworthy to Newcastle. Can't remember who with or how we finished up, but I do remember we were pretty well gone by the time we got to Raymond Terrace.

I was mates with Geoff Flett (we were then in 130 Gun Loc). He had his MGB then, and would bring its chrome spoke wheels, one at a time, into the barracks at night and polish them up. I remember the disaster of coming back to the barracks pissed one night, with Geoff in the Fiat, braking and sliding in the muddy carpark, only to run into the back of the MG.....oh he was dirty. I think he forgave me though. I did go to Gunnedah with him for the annual ball. On the Saturday we did a lap around the paddock on his farm in some huge tractor machine, got spruced up and finished up escorting the Queen of the Ball. The next day he gave us a bit of a display of dirt driving, (drifting they call it now). He never let me drive again. It was a great weekend.

One thing about Fletty, he could drive a car and he could drive a golf ball. I think he was a state junior champion at that time.

One other memory was of Bill Breheny, the wild man from the West. He managed to get hold of a WWII army Harley Davidson. A 40's model I think with a stick gear shift, One Saturday he was demonstrating it outside the Canopus Room, gave it a run down the esplanade, stood it on its back wheel, lost control and finished up in the pine trees. Somehow, despite that bloody Millers Pub, we kept out of gaol.

Well, just a couple of memories. There should be someone who can fill out detail, it was a long time ago you know Keep up the good work .Regards Geoff'

. **Paul Dickson** –



In '66 I had an MGTF 1500 – a classic! Dad had to go guarantee for the loan. Amazing how you could pay off a HP loan, pay board, smoke, DRINK (was I legal?) and do whatever on 10 pounds a week (before Feb'66)? Sold it before SVN, then bought the British Racing Austin Healy MkIIIA – tonneau cover, used the mesh-back gloves from the TF era, got it up over 100mph on the freeway north of Sydney – SVN must have had a lasting effect on me! Someone broke the quarter window while parked in Bondi one night, which left me puzzled as to why would someone break a quarter window on a car with a rag top to try and knock something off?? Must have been a Kiwi!! I later bought an MGB, but the Sprite was hard to beat.

. ANZAC Day continues...

. **Les Falkai** – “This year spent a week at Blinman in the Flinders Ranges with a team of vets at Angarichna Station. We spend a week working on projects at the station. The station owners, Fargehers, look forward to our visit and enjoy the camaraderie of the group which include our wives. One of the vets organised and conducted the service in Blinman. In all some 22 vets from all around attended. After the service we marched to the pub where we were dismissed. Guess where we went. I was the sole "drop short" the rest were "grunts" from 3, 4 and 7RAR and one "blue orchid". It is a great way to recharge the batteries for the next 12 months.

Does anyone have up to date contact for any of the following; Peter Saint , Ron "Romeo Romeo" Ryan , Mike Butler , Joe Molenkamp , Terry "Tiny" Welsh , Len Walker , Kev Browning , Tony Turner ? They were some of the surveyors (70/71) to whom I was attached as a sig. from time to time. Are there any 131 personnel in S.A.? Les Falkai”

. **John Blake** – “Paul - a fabulous effort again. Thanks.

There was no Anzac Day submission from Brisbane. This sadly fits my experience. Once we passed the custody of the 131 association administration to Coffs Harbour, just as Sydney had passed it to us, it was shelved by them. For some reason I think we handed them everything including the banner so there is nothing about which for us to rally. Once Chalky Royal died the glue that held us together seemed gone. Even the regular unit seems to have no veteran involvement. Terrible.

It was great to see that Leigh Hemming came out of the woodwork for Sydney.

Anzac day I attended the Dawn Service in the city with a couple of non-vet friends. This has become a bit of a tradition. Coffee and breakfast in the city then back home to march for the local suburban effort. I really enjoyed that again, marching next to my son-in-law, a Timor vet. No photos – sorry. John.”

. **Dave Auld** – “Hi Paul I went back to my home town of Coolah for ANZAC Day - had a great time, found a locator from ww2 2/1 Survey Regt RAA. I will send some photos when my son sends them to me. David”

. **John Dellaca** gives us a late look at the Melbourne March...



“Hi Dicko, I know these are a little late but here are a couple photos from Anzac Day March Melbourne. (We missed you)!!!

Standing Group... Pierre Goss, 69-70
John Bayford 67-68 Mitch Millar 67-68
John Dellaca 68-69
Detachment Members marching
Good weather, a good roll up of 12
vets from all years, good day had by
all.
Regards
John Dellaca”



. Memories –

Morley, Allen reflects on some of the many hidden (perhaps they should have stayed that way!) talents displayed by some of the blokes...

“Reading the back copies of E&E, especially mention of the 1st/83rd barber shop, brought back a memory of an afternoon at 31A. One Gunner had been advised by an officer to get a haircut by day’s end ...or else. My recollection is that the “haircutee” was Tony Goldsmith and the “haircutter”, Leigh Hemming. Maybe it was the other way around? But with the full confidence in his ability Leigh (for the sake of the argument until a counter position is put) convinced Tony that he could do the job. With scissors and clippers Leigh set to work, making bigger and more uneven cuts all around, until Tony’s haircut resembled a basin cut gone horribly wrong. When Tony looked in the mirror after Leigh proffered a ‘finished’ observation, the air became quite colourful. I think that may have been the beginning and the end of the application of Leigh’s tonsorial skills.”

. Locating Artillery Assoc....notes taken from the LAA website –

. The next Annual General Meeting for the Association will next be held on **18 July 2010** in the **Newcastle/Hunter Region**. This will be hosted by the Newcastle and Hunter Valley Branch and will also include a Dinner the evening before the Annual General Meeting

Venue will be **Telarah Bowling Club**, South Street, Telarah (Maitland).

There will be a Formal Dinner on Saturday evening 17 July 2010, 1800hrs for 1900hrs. Details are in the [application form](#) and/or [Locrep](#).

Dress: Gentlemen, Coat and Tie; Ladies, After Five, and Medals and Decorations are to be worn.

The Telarah Bowling Club will also be the venue for the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 18 July 2010. Details are in the [application form](#) and/or [Locrep](#). Dress: Smart Casual

Complete the [application form](#) and make your Cheque or Money Order made payable to the Locating Artillery Association Newcastle & Hunter Valley Branch and sent to The Secretary Newcastle & Hunter Valley Branch, PO Box 366, East Maitland NSW 2323:

For booking details check out our website to download form -

<http://www.locatingartillery.org/Forms/Attendance%20Form.final.pdf>

. 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 27 June.

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...May...another 27 blokes enriched the 131 personnel coffers!!

Crikey the month starts off with a trifecta of Nick Armstrong, **Michael Young** and **Brett Rainsford** all happening on the 2nd, Brian Killworth and **Peter Robertson** claim the 4th, David Cornell said g'day to his Mum on the 5th, John "Beau" Roberts shares the 8th with **Graeme Owen** – Beau was actually born on VE Day and Graeme on the third anniversary!!, Ken Woodbine and Michael Quinlan made '46 a great year on the 10th, Bob King was "exposed" on the 11th, now here's a likely duo of Merv Nairn and Gordon Williams being introduced to the world on Thursday 12th, the late David Keech was born on 13th, **Dennis Dye** and **Terry Weeks** saw the light of day on the 19th, the TAFE Bastion was strengthened when word got out that Nick Proskurin came out cooked on 20th, Peter Ravelje made the grand entry on 12st, the 22nd bought **Brian Turner** to life, **Jim Selwood** had the 23rd to himself, not sure whether or not **John Brewer** on the 24th would have known he'd do one tour with us then back up with 4 Fd Regt a year later, **Ken Whittle** took the first of many breathes on 26th and Bert Blink repeated the exercise in Holland one year later on the same date, **Sytse Elzinga** got in on the 28th, then Warwick Brooker made it on 30th some 21 years before his nemesis "K07" and shared a start to life with late Ron Webb (who passed away some 23 years ago) and another one of our late comrades in Roger Long.

Ed – there's another **12 blokes (in bold)** that still need to be found before we have to look for another 12.

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 40 and we've sent out 36... **Ed** - Thanks fellas and keep 'em coming.

. **Found, lost...**it's great news that we've had no reports of losses this month, but we've had no additions either.

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

