



Something old, something new...but the thoughts are still the same.

– from the Det of blokes at Eyes & Ears.

Heard and seen...

. **Hallmark Cards** has approached the Association after procuring the rights to this photo of **Allen Morley** and **Nick Proskurin** which was taken during the heat of an Op where their thoughts drifted to other things.

Nick, finally, had to be evacuated from the hole by the Engineers as the search for the elusive present got him to 27 metres deep and lack of oxygen was becoming critical.

It wasn't til much later that AI had the courage to tell Nick, at his hospital bedside, that they had the wrong co-ordinates and it was nearer Baria and not the Horseshoe!

It turned out to be not the merriest of Christmases! This photo was taken the Year that Allen received a Chicom 82mm Mortar Tailfin for Christmas, just what he'd always wanted.



. **Allen Morley** sent this article in and it has a real ring of interest to it as it's quite topical amongst the ex-Nasho Vets as to "what did they do after the army?"

It's a strange topic and I guess we've all had differing experiences, and we're made aware by the blokes who have gone down the "Locator Profile" path that it becomes evident that we are a diversified bunch.

A couple of examples via Profiles come to mind – Graham Williams and Kevin Grimes – both whom with the aid of incredible memories list an absolute wrath of jobs, moves etc. I always thought I was a nomad with about 9 jobs in 3 states intermingled with living at about 13 different addresses.

However, there is a more serious side to this article and it does relate to the sooner than expected unemployment or more possibly the unemployable factor that has beset no doubt a number of us.

Again, and like Allen it raises the question of – "How many jobs did you have post the army and retirement?" and "was retirement earlier than expected?"

Could you all give it a crack and submit something – it'll be good to record some sort of history/statistics on was the effect of the SVN experience. Just jobs, moves – whatever comes to mind etc.

I think before the intervention of Conscription we possibly all believed that had some sort of a career path – some of us stuck with that, but evidence does show that a lot of us went off in all sorts of tangents. Mind you some were certainly for the better, but a lot of them petered out on the early side.

Dr Siminski's comments and more so his last few paragraphs highlight or touch on interesting territory of the inconsistencies of the "assessment" practice. Hope you find it interesting and it could and should create a topical forum on the web. **Ed.**

. **Tianjara's History** continues to intrigue with **Ernie Newbold** penning the following – "G'day Paul,

I can't remember if I told you this story or not, so I'll tell it again just in case.

At the L.A.A. reunion in Coffs Harbour recently I was talking to **Peter (Pappy) Gault** and the subject of Tianjara somehow came up. Well Pappy and I had gone on two exercises to Tianjara the second of which we were with the same L.P. group as **John Blake**, where we set up our L.P. in an overhanging rock shelter at the top of a hill. The overhang kept us out of the rain while we watched the Medium gun battery with their Mack tractors and 5.5" guns struggling overnight to get over a slippery, wet clay uphill road below our L.P. position.

Later we were moved to a new L.P. position and our old position was used as a target by the 5.5" guns. We did return there briefly before returning to Holsworthy and were glad that we weren't there when the guns were firing at it. The firing had obviously been very accurate.

Many years later Pappy and his family were living at Ulladulla on the N.S.W. South Coast and Pappy was by then the proud owner of a four wheel drive vehicle. One day he decided to take his family for a drive to Tianjara and after driving around on the bush tracks for a while he spotted a familiar looking hill. Leaving the vehicle Pappy and his family climbed the hill to the rock overhang and lo and behold it was our old L.P. position.

Pappy found there buried in the sandy floor old empty ration tins etc. which I'm sure that we wouldn't have left behind so there must have been other groups who camped there at other times while Tianjara was still an Army training area. Regards, Ernie."

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2011

The Sydney Morning Herald

Long after war's end, Vietnam conscripts battle to keep working

Peter Martin
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

ROD HOMEWOOD found it difficult to hold down a job when he came back from Vietnam. Over three decades the former conscript reckons he held 16 jobs.

"Then I lost it, I fell off my tree," he said. "Everything snowballed, they pulled me out of the work at age 54 and I haven't had a job since."

A new study – the first of its kind in Australia – finds Mr Homewood's experience typical. Conscripts who went to Vietnam were about as likely as anyone else to be in work until the 1990s, when their likelihood of employment began to dive.

Using census data on employment status by birth date, a University of Wollongong economist, Peter Siminski, found men born on the dates represented by the marbles drawn out of the barrel to select conscripts were far less likely to still be employed than men born on other dates in the same years.

When Dr Siminski narrowed the birthdates down to the battalions that went to Vietnam rather than served at home he found the effect was worth 37 percentage points.

"To give you an idea of what that means, typically 72 per cent of the men born in those years were still working at the time of the census," he said.

"This effect is more than half as big. The conscripts who went to Vietnam are half as likely to be still working as their peers born

at around the same times." Dr Siminski's study will be published in the *Review of Economics and Statistics* early next year.

Using separate Australian Taxation Office data, Dr Siminski found the effect on employment is relatively recent, building since the mid-1990s.

He said the results were consistent, with age exacerbating war-related conditions. But in the US, the effect is less obvious. Although he could not be certain, Dr Siminski said Australia's effect could be driven by the design of the disability-service pension.

Unlike the US system, it ties the rate of payment to an assessment of employability. Veterans assessed as being totally and permanently incapacitated get a much bigger payment than veterans assessed as being able to do more work.

"I am not saying the system is too generous," Dr Siminski said. "The problem is it is tied to employability."

"I actually have a lot of sympathy for these guys and everything they have gone through. It's not the level, it's the design. A simple solution would be to give everyone the top rate. I wouldn't have a problem with that."

Mr Homewood keeps himself busy volunteering at Victoria State Emergency Service. He agreed it is worthwhile being assessed as totally and permanently incapacitated, but that it was not easy. "They try not to give it to you. It took many years until they connected my condition with service," he said.

Ed – Ernie, I'm surprised by your comments about the subject of Tianjara coming up at a Locators Reunion (doesn't it always?) and why is it so special that Pappy Gault is the only one who has taken his family to the that majestic scenic spot – well for maybe 3 days of the year it may be traversable! Doesn't everyone?

. Bert Blink in his usual curious manner wanted to know where certain editions of '67 *Eyes & Ears* were as it leaves holes in the web archives, so **Ed** posed this ugly question – “Q: Now that the statute of limitations has definitely expired it is about time someone owned up about smuggling Vol 1 No 1 , Vol 1 No 7 and Vol 1 No 9 of *Eyes & Ears* into the country after their tour, some time in '67 or later, and **NOT** declaring them at H.M. Customs. OK who is it?” Which afforded this response from **Graham Dignam...** - “All - How many pages did the first edition run to? Did everyone get a copy or was it distributed to each "Call-sign" position? How come there are no long hand notes? Blue Leaders Monthly report for July 67 mentions that the Newsletter was published on 22/7/67 and that it would be a weekly- just like the "Sydney Turf Guide of the time".

I honestly can't recall typing the "INK"-ed version that goes to the Gestetner for producing the printed version. If fact I have the feeling in my water that I may have been expressly EXCLUDED from the process (didn't pass typing test!).

"I went out and bought a second-hand reconditioned Gestetner mimeograph and a big, heavy office Ambassador manual typewriter with which to cut the wax stencils..."

. The joys of wax stencils – trying to proof read them, trying to correct them (and heaven help you if you jumped a line). The stinky pink correcting fluid; the stencil glue that smelled like rotten apples, both of which could give you quite a buzz ("No, officer, I've just been printing a fanzine..."), the duplicator ink that dried on the rollers on very hot days part-way through a run and tended to run out on a public holiday. Anyway, the thermocopier which never reproduced art properly"

The above lends me to think we didn't have a Gestetner as the only copying need the Orderly Room would have was for the occasional Charge Sheet and Warwicks' reports - no high volume output. Was it printed somewhere else as a "Foreign Order"?

Dicko was there any fanfare or was it a "Skunkworks" project that burst into the daylight from the Uterus of your invention? GD"

Locator Locations

A couple of month's back we had a crack at filling some spaces with names, then thought we should get dates where and when blokes were in the Battery and Detachment. We've got the completed bones in **Bold** below in the following table -

131	Position	Call -sign	Location	Locator Name and Dates
Battery	HQ			Browning K BSM WO1 (Jan 81 – Dec 82 Enoggera), Evans J (BC 82/83), Grime K, Kaplun J (Sch of Arty), Lynas H WO1 (Sch of arty), Richmond J (7/66-1/68-Q Store), Salter K WO1/BSM
	Arty Tac			Brewer C (133), Ray R Sgt (130) (1965-72)
	Radar			Auld D (12/71-10/74), Cook C WOII, Grime K, Jenkins M, Young H
	Survey			Browning K Bdr/Sgt - Holsworthy), Foley C W02 (63-64), Lynas H WO1
	Sound Ranging			Armstrong N Bdr (67), Morrison R Capt (133), Young H
	Meteorology			
Detachment	Det HQ	?	Support	Boutlis S, Boaler R L/Bdr, Dignam G, Fletcher P L/Bdr (4/67-12/67), McNicol D Bdr, Morley A, Reid J Bdr, Royal R WOII, Vitkovsky J L/Bdr
	Arty Tac	30	TFAIO	Adams A, Blackwell G (6/67-12/67 & 1/68-5/68), Blink B, Boaler R L/Bdr, Browne J, Campbell B, Dean K, Dickson P (5/67-12/67), Evans J, Evans R, Falkai L, Hamilton W Capt, King R (24/12/67), McNicol D, Maker K Bdr, Meaney P, Newbold E, Niewenhof R Bdr, Proskurin N L/Bdr, Smith N Bdr, Smith G, Spencer D, Waghorn T Sgt, Williams G, Wilson R
	Listening Post	31A	Nui Dat Hill	Campbell B, Binns P, Boaler R L/Bdr, Danko V L/Bdr, Goldsmith A, Guzder B, Hemming L, King R (30.09.67 – Op Kenmore), Maker K Bdr, Marques E L/Bdr, Newbold E, Pettiford P, Proskurin N L/Bdr, Reid J Bdr, Smith G, Wilson R, Woodbine K
	Listening Post	31B	Horseshoe	Binns P, Boaler R L/Bdr, Danko V L/Bdr, Goldsmith A, Guzder B, Maker K Bdr, Marques E L/Bdr, Price G L/Bdr, Proskurin N L/Bdr, Reid J Bdr, Spencer D, Williams G
	Listening Post	31C	Engineers	Bayfield J, Binns P, Boutlis S, Briggs S, Carroll G, Chase E, Evans R, Gault P (5/67-8/12), Guzder B, Hemming L, King R (12/06/67 & 17/11/67), Reid J Bdr, Williams G
	Listening Post	31D	US 183rd	Billiards B, Blackwell G (12/67), Blake J (5/67-12/67),

				Blink B, Boutlis S, Danko V L/Bdr, Dart M Bdr Dec'd (?/67) Hemming L, King R (31/10/67) , Marques E L/Bdr, Proskurin N L/Bdr, Spencer D,
	Radar	32 A	Alpha Radar	Boutlis S, Butcher P, Chase E, Coutts A (D'cd) (1/68-1/69) l'Anson J, Opie A, Sheedy P (1/68-1/69) Webber H
	Radar	32 B	Bravo Radar	Amos I, Chase E, l'Anson J, Kennedy I, Lane G (5/66-12/66) , Malcolm G, Sporn S, Williams G
	Survey	?	Survey	Armstrong N Bdr (10/67-10/68) , Billiards B (Survey Sig), Boutlis S, Brooker W (5/67-02/68) , Browne J, Browning K (Sep 68 – Sep 69 & April 71 - Nov 71) then NOT 131 with HQ Bty 12 Fd Regt (June to Nov - then went home) , Butler M, Colman P (12/69-12/70) , Doyle D, Erbs T (10/68-6/69) , Erica B, Evans J, Farrar K, Fitzgerald J, Holden G, Hopper P Bdr (5/67-12/67) , Irvine B L/Bdr , Jackson R, Maker K Bdr , Mc Donnell R (Driver), McNamara K, Owen G, Pioro R, Smith G , Woodbine K
	Sound Ranging	?	?	Browning K (dual hatted with Survey - Nov 68 to Sep 69) , Jackson R, ,Jeffrey W Owen G, Erbs, T
	Surveillance (from 1970)	?	?	
	Workshop	?	?	

It's interesting to note the piquet duties etc done in LPs by Surveyors – not listed above as they involved numerous sites and people, but it shows a good cross pollination of activities. Warwick Brooker and Peter Hopper worked piquets at LPs.

Kevin Browning adds: As for the Survey and Sound ranging fold it was a twin job between Nov 68 until I left in 1970 (date unsure) so those who were survey also did the sound ranging.

It's also interesting to note where blokes were shifted around during a tour.

We're hoping by publishing this it might prompt a few more responses to get a few more **bold** notes above and on the web.

. **Ernie Newbold**, some time ago, embarked on a Service Medals for South Vietnam search and we're going to run a series on the findings over the next few months, starting with...

Decorations, Badges and Awards for service in South Vietnam

Part one Returned from Active Service Badge



The Returned from Active Service Badge in its present form, has been awarded to eligible service personnel since 1939. The only significant change occurred when the current Queen's crown replaced that of her fathers'. It continues to be awarded today in conjunction with the Australian Active Service Medal where service qualifies for the award of this medal, eg Kuwait and Somalia and is being issued for current service in areas such as East Timor, today.

Returned from Active Service Badges have a unique serial number on their reverse side. This is a manufacturing number, and is not related to Service Numbers. For World War Two soldiers, these serial numbers were recorded in the Individuals Service Records and were also recorded on the Individual's Certificate of Discharge.

The badges are awarded by the Australian Army, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Australian Navy and the Australian Mercantile Marine, and have a letter prefixed to the serial number to identify the branch of the service by which it was issued:

A = Army; **AF** = Air Force; **N** = Navy; **MN** = Merchant Navy.

The words "Issued by the C'wlth Govt" are moulded on the back of the badge along the boomerang on Vietnam era badges.

Name of Award: Returned from Active Service Badge

Description of Badge:

This badge combines the emblems of all services together in the following manner. A centrally placed Crown mounted above a chain and anchor which in turn rests in the middle of an up turned boomerang. A rising sun badge sits behind the crown which in turn is placed in front of a pair of RAAF wings. The words, "Returned from Active Service Badge" are inscribed into the front of the boomerang.

Clasp or Emblem Worn (if Awarded): Nil

Conditions of Award, (Australian Army): Service in Vietnam (Southern Zone) between 31 July 1962 and 27 January 1973.

Ed – we'll move onto the **Vietnam Medal - British Imperial Award** in January.

. Continuing with the **last** in the series by Ian Kuring which we commenced in Octobers *Eyes & Ears...*

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY AND THE VIETNAM WAR 1962-1972

AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE OPERATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM 1966-1971 by Ian Kuring

The Long Hai Hills

The Long Hai Hills were a rugged set of hills in the south of Phuoc Tuy Province, in close proximity to heavily populated areas that included the large towns of Dat Do and Long Dien. The Viet Cong had established living and logistic storage areas there, many utilising caves in the hills and covered the approaches with defended positions and booby traps and mines.

The Task Force mounted three major operations into the Long Hai Hills and while destroying Viet Cong camps and storage areas, including installations in caves, was never successful in denying the Viet Cong use of the area. Each of the three operations resulted in large numbers of Australian casualties from mines and booby traps. As the Allied forces did not have the resources to establish bases in the Long Hai Hills, Allied artillery fire, strike aircraft and naval gunfire regularly bombarded selected areas there.

The first Australian search and destroy operation into the Long Hai Hills was Operation RENMARK which took place during 18-22 February 1967. While enemy camps and storage areas were destroyed the infantrymen from 5RAR suffered heavy casualties (seven killed and 22 wounded) from mines and booby traps, without the satisfaction of having fought any battles with the enemy.

The second major Australian search and destroy operation into the Long Hai Hills was carried out during March-April 1968 and involved a combined arms force based on 3RAR, supported by five B52 strikes. Again camps and storage areas in caves and installations were discovered and destroyed. Australian casualties during Operation PINNAROO were five killed and 40 wounded, with known Viet Cong casualties of 40 killed.

In February 1970, 8RAR supported by tanks carried out the last major Australian operation into the Long Hai Hills. A successful ambush and battle with a bunker system had to be balanced with Australian casualties of nine killed and fifteen wounded from two mine incidents and the withdrawal of the enemy battalion from the area as the Australian forces repositioned for a B52 bombing strike to take place. While 42 enemy were confirmed killed, intelligence information later indicated that over 100 enemy had been killed during Operation HAMMERSLEY.

The Australian Minefield and Viet Cong Mine Warfare

During March-April 1967 the Task Force established a permanent fire support base for a rifle company and section of artillery on the Horseshoe feature, located on the northern outskirts of the town of Dat Do. This enabled the Australians to extend their operational influence into a heavily populated area that was sympathetic to the Viet Cong and to provide fire support for operations in the southern parts of the province from Dat Do to the South China Sea and the Long Hai Hills and to the east of the province toward Xuyen Moc.

However the Task Force made a big mistake when it constructed a twelve kilometre barrier minefield, enclosed by barbed wire fences that ran from the Horseshoe feature past Dat Do to the village of Long Phuoc Hai on the coast. The aim of the minefield was to create an obstacle to Viet Cong movement between their base areas in the east of the province and the populated areas in the central southern area of the province, as well as their bases in the Long Hai Hills. As the Australians were stretched for manpower, security of the minefield was left to the local South Vietnamese territorial force units manning compounds and outposts in the area. Very soon, the mines were being skilfully removed by the Viet Cong and used offensively by them with great success to cause casualties to Allied forces personnel in Phuoc Tuy Province.

The Viet Cong were also adept at manufacturing their own mines and explosive devices from explosive taken from unexploded Allied artillery shells and aerial bombs. The Viet Cong anti-tank mines had spectacularly disastrous and lethal effects against armoured personnel carriers and light vehicles.

The Australian Army had gone into the Vietnam War knowing that the Viet Cong employed mines and booby traps as a normal part of their operations, and Australian soldiers were trained accordingly. However the prolific use of mines by the Viet Cong in the southern areas of Phuoc Tuy Province and the high number of battle casualties caused by them (approximately 50 per cent of Australian battle casualties), led to the employment of field engineer splinter teams with infantry and armour sub-units on operations. Sadly, Australian senior commanders had been responsible for the decision to employ the barrier minefield, which provided the Viet Cong with a ready supply of mines. Australian Army engineers eventually completed the removal of the minefield during early 1970, but the mines continued to cause Allied casualties.

Out of Province and Main Force Operations, January 1968-June 1969

In December 1967, the Task Force was reinforced with a third infantry battalion, and during early 1968 its strength was further boosted by the arrival of a squadron of Centurion tanks and additional Iroquois helicopters for the RAAF helicopter squadron.

The increase in strength effectively doubled the combat power and operational flexibility of the Task Force. Large-scale operations based on the employment of two infantry battalions could be conducted away from Nui Dat, while the

third infantry battalion looked after the security of Nui Dat and the Horseshoe and provided a ready reaction force. The conduct of operations well away from Nui Dat also meant that fire support bases had to be established to provide command facilities and fire support for battalion operations.

During the period January 1968 to June 1969 the Task Force was involved in search and destroy operations against Local and Main Force Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army units not only throughout the more remote areas of Phuoc Tuy Province, but also in Bien Hoa and Long Khanh Provinces to provide security on the approaches to Saigon and the American base areas at Long Binh and Bien Hoa.

In January-February 1968 the Viet Cong mounted a massive offensive throughout South Vietnam during the traditional Tet festivities. The Task Force found itself simultaneously protecting the approaches to the American bases at Long Binh and Bien Hoa as well as fighting the Viet Cong in Phuoc Tuy Province. Operation COBURG, involving 2RAR, and 7RAR, was carried out in the border area between Bien Hoa and Long Khanh Provinces, while companies from 3RAR were involved in fighting in Phuoc Tuy Province to remove the Viet Cong from Baria and Long Dien.

In May 1968 the Task Force was again involved in operations to protect the approaches to the American bases at Long Binh and Bien Hoa when it was redeployed to carry out operations on enemy withdrawal routes north of Saigon. The Australians became involved in intense battles with North Vietnamese units, where for the first time they were confronted with enemy soldiers who came looking for them during 1RAR's battles at Fire Support Base Coral and 3RAR's battles at Fire Support Base Balmoral. During the first night at Fire Support Base Coral, part of the Australian defensive perimeter was penetrated and the Australians were forced to fight to retake artillery pieces and mortars that had been captured by the enemy. As a result of the initial Fighting at Coral, the Centurion tanks were deployed to the area from Nui Dat, a distance of approximately 100 kilometres.

During August 1968 while the emphasis was on operations in the more remote areas of Phuoc Tuy Province, two companies from 1RAR supported by tanks were involved in intense fighting to clear a company group of Viet Cong from the town of Long Dien.

Bunker Fighting

During the Task Force's early search and destroy operations the enemy was usually discovered living in or having occupied camps without well developed field defences and bunker systems. From late-1967 this started to change, as the enemy was increasingly found to be occupying well-sited and well-concealed bunker systems. In many cases the bunkers were so well concealed that infantrymen were already within the bunker system when they discovered it. Enemy fighting from bunkers were difficult to overcome and it was found that infantry fire and movement, supported by artillery fire and air attack was not usually sufficient to remove them. The fight usually resulted in a stalemate as infantry casualties increased and movement was restricted by enemy fire. The best chances for success in bunker fighting were achieved when the tanks were brought forward to support the infantry with their firepower.

Unfortunately Australian preparation and training for bunker fighting in Vietnam was almost non-existent, and this also included infantry working with tanks. However, close combat with a determined Asian enemy fighting from bunker systems in jungle terrain should not have been a surprise for the Australian Army. The lessons of light infantry requiring the support of tanks to defeat an enemy fighting from bunkers had been learnt against the Japanese in New Guinea during the Second World War.

Operations in Phuoc Tuy Province, July 1969-October 1971

During July 1969 to October 1971 the Task Force continued to carry out reconnaissance in force and land clearing operations throughout Phuoc Tuy Province to keep the Local and Main Force Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army units off balance. Most of these operations were carried out in the northern border area of Phuoc Tuy Province stretching from Hat Dich in the west across to the May Tao Mountains in the east and the areas in the east around Xuyen Moc. These were interspersed with pacification operations carried out in and around the populated areas of the province in a continuing effort to disrupt the local Viet Cong guerrilla groups and the support they received from the population.

At the end of July 1971, during Operation IRON FOX, 'C' and 'D' Companies of 4RAR/NZ supported by tanks and artillery fire were involved in battles with two large bunker systems occupied by members of 274 Viet Cong Main Force Regiment. Australian casualties were one killed and seven wounded with known enemy casualties of at least twelve killed and an unknown number entombed in bunkers that had been crushed by the tanks.

During September 1971, 33 NVA Regiment moved back into the north of Phuoc Tuy Province in anticipation of the Australian withdrawal from Nui Dat. On 21 September, during Operation IVANHOE, 'B' Company 4RAR/NZ fought an encounter battle with a battalion from 33 NVA Regiment and 'D' Company 4RAR/NZ fought a battle with another battalion from 33 NVA Regiment in a bunker system. Australian casualties were five killed and thirty wounded. On this occasion the fighting was much tougher for the Australian infantrymen as the squadron of tanks had already been withdrawn to Vung Tau in preparation for its return to Australia. For this last Australian battle in Phuoc Tuy Province, the infantrymen of 4RAR/NZ had to rely on artillery fire and generous amounts of aerial fire support from fighter aircraft and gunship helicopters.

These final battles resulted in major enemy units being forced to withdraw from Phuoc Tuy Province, not long after having re-entered it. In September 1971, Viet Cong strength in Phuoc Tuy Province had been reduced to around 1400 personnel, roughly one third of what had been available in mid-1966. However enemy strength had been increased by the deployment of 33 NVA Regiment with approximately 1220 personnel.

The Australian Task Force ceased operations in Phuoc Tuy Province in October 1971 and 4RAR withdrew from Nui Dat on 7 November. While the Task Force had achieved success in most of its battles with Viet Cong and North

Vietnamese Army units in South Vietnam, it was unsuccessful in eliminating the Viet Cong infrastructure from Phuoc Tuy Province. When the Task Force ceased operations, the Viet Cong influence on the population had been greatly reduced and the people were able to go about their business in daylight without great risk. Unfortunately this situation did not last and during 1972 the Viet Cong started to regain control in most areas of Phuoc Tuy Province.

Conclusion

For the Australian Army its operational experience in South Vietnam could be described as a revolution in military affairs. It had improved the mobility, firepower, communications, combat clothing, footwear, and load carrying equipment used by its combat soldiers.

However, the problems of Australian combat units always having to operate under strength and of heavily loaded infantrymen continually pushing the limits of their endurance in the extremes of terrain and climate for periods of four to six weeks at a time without a break were not solved.

The Australian Army established itself as one of the world's leading exponents of light infantry operations in counter revolutionary warfare and jungle terrain, and gained valuable experience in combined arms operations and some aspects of joint warfare. Its operational experience in Vietnam had highlighted the need to deploy a balanced and adequately equipped task force organisation for the duration of any future combat deployment.

While its expertise in counter revolutionary warfare and jungle operations were allowed to atrophy in the post-Vietnam era, the experience gained in combined arms and joint operations in South Vietnam has played an important part in the force development of today's Australian Army.

Ed – That ends the series – hope you all enjoyed it? We'll keep our collective Eyes & Ears open for more similar stuff.

. Ed - If I can digress for one moment – I discovered this photo amongst **Ernie Newbold's** archived collection while I was looking for something else.



I just think this lone M60 with the ammo belt, where someone had taken the time to put 2 kinks in it is a statement on its own. Were we counting rounds?

Was it ever used in anger – I guess who cares? Curiously it has a piece of wire from the carry strap holder to below the bench top...why?

I think I know the answer, but I'd like the correct one or at least a better guess?

. More email congestion...Ed floated a paragraph on a history section of the web site and was immediately seized upon by both **Ernie Newbold** and **Bert Blink** for my lack of "correct" detail.

Bert was first cab off the rank with – "Hi Paul, According to the spreadsheet Keith supplied, together with some updates via the Nominal Roll, we have the following:- The first people to arrive were 20 Det 131 people who arrived in SVN on 20th of March 1966. The last people to leave were 6 Det 131 people who departed SVN on 18 November 1971.

Using the magic of computers this gives the number of days deployed in SVN by Det 131 as 2070 days."

So I adjusted my sights and sent this to **Bob Billiards** - "During the 1966 to 1971 period of the Vietnam War, Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery became the longest continuing Detachment in the Royal Australian Artillery having been deployed 2070 days with the first 20 members arriving in SVN on 20th of March 1966 and the last group of 6 departing SVN on 18 November 1971. During this period 463 Locators served on a rotational basis, with some completing multiple tours."

...well this started a proverbial landslide...

Here's **Ernie** – "G'day Bert and Paul,

The details shown in "Tracks of the Dragon" by Keith Ayliffe and John Posener would appear to be the best source of information for the Detachment due to the unavailability of any other official records. The following details are from the Nominal Roll for the Detachment as shown in "Tracks of the Dragon"

The first group to leave Holsworthy were 17 people of the Advance Party who sailed on the HMAS Sydney on 22nd April 1966.

The second group of 15, the remainder of the Advance Party left from RAAF Richmond via a chartered Qantas flight on 4th May 1966.

The Main Body of the Detachment of 34 people also left from RAAF Richmond via a chartered Qantas flight on 20th May 1966.

There is no mention at all of any personnel going over on 20th March 1966 and in the Nominal Roll for the Detachment there is no listing of any people prior to the 1st part of the Advance Party which left on 22nd April. I can find no mention of what date the HMAS Sydney docked in Vietnam (Vung Tau).

Bert, does Keith's spread sheet list the names of the 20 personnel who are said to have arrived in SVN on 20th March 1966? If so then we can check those names against the Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans?

In "Tracks of the Dragon" Keith has written that 463 locators served with the Detachment on a rotational basis over 5 years and 2 months for a total of 1886 days. However there may be discrepancies as the nominal roll lists 457 names, not including the 34 RAEME members who staffed the 131 Detachment Workshops.

Of the 457 names listed there are at least two who appear to have been listed twice in error for the same tour of duty and they are Brian Black (157 & 161) and Jeff Jebb (211 & 213).

If we look for the dates at which the Detachment was formed and disbanded there may be some uncertainty here too, Capt Townley is listed as the first O.C. of the Detachment from 23rd April 1966 which was the day after the HMAS Sydney set sail for Vung Tau with Capt. Townley on board.

Capt. Tim Ford was the last O.C. of the Detachment, until 20th August 1971.

If Tim Ford was the last O.C. then may we presume that there was no Detachment after 20th August 1971 although official records show that Tim Ford left Vietnam on 5th August 1971? This would indicate that the Detachment was wound up after the O.C. had arrived back in Australia.

The former Detachment personnel who stayed on in Vietnam after the Detachment was disbanded were transferred to 12 Field Regt, 161 Recce Flight or HQ A.F.V. for the remainder of their tour of duty.

The last of the former Detachment personnel to leave Vietnam, according to the Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans was Kevin Geoghegan who returned to Australia on 23rd December 1971 after transferring to H.Q. A.F.V. on 2nd June 1971.

If we are to re-write the Detachment History details in regards to the matters mentioned above then we will need access to more official records from 131 Divisional Locating Battery. I am quite happy to let Keith and John's book stand as the official history of the Detachment as it was written.

Regards, Ernie."

...this gave rise to a response from **Bert** –

"Hi Ernie

This is not an answer to all your questions.

(1) The list I am using is the one supplied by Keith & then amended as per VNR records.

(2) I made a minor glitch, so will list the details as I have them.

1 Person (Sellwood J F) - 20/03/1966

17 People (including Townley J H) - 22/04/1966

13 People - 04/05/1966

1 Person (McDonnell M E) - 05/05/1966

33 People - 20/05/1966

1 Person (Tanner R S) - 21/05/1966

This roughly matches what you have 66 people. See point (4) below it looks like 22/04/1966 is the preferred start date.

(3) As you say the End Date is more problematic. The VNR lists Robotham A D as the last Det 131 person to leave SVN on 18/11/1971. As you rightly point out the other 5 were posted to 12 Fd Regt on various dates before they left SVN as was K D Geoghegan who was posted to out of Det 131 on 1/6/1971.

(4) I currently have a list of problems with Det 131 People details in the VNR. This is being looked at by DVA who maintain the VNR.

(5) I have a list of dates for various Det 131 events in SVN and the "Detachment Disbanded" date is given as July 1971 (no day) see below: (from the DiggerHistory website currently off the air)

. April 1966 Detachment arrived in South Vietnam with Radar, Survey and Artillery Intelligence Section.

. Oct/Nov 1968 Sound Ranging base deployed in Nui Dat.

. July 1970 Radar Section disbanded. Sensor Section commenced.

. Oct 1970 Sound Ranging base disbanded.

. June 1971 Survey Section transferred to 12th Field Regiment.

. July 1971 Detachment Disbanded.

So a better approximation, as Ernie suggested, a Start Date of 22/04/1966 Capt Townley (not sure where the 23rd comes from) and an End date of 5 August 1971 Capt Ford, this gives a Deployment count of 1932 Days. Bert"

...**Ed** couldn't resist the following -

"Just to make you all smile and add more "curiosities" - consider the following in alphabetical order -

Dickson - 223 days, Goldsmith - 222 days, Hemming - 222 days

We all physically left and returned on the same dates – same aircraft! We all got on the flight out of Mascot at the same time, but was I the last on the QF flight out of Saigon and was the time 0001 hrs on the 12.12.67, because according to Army records they both left on 11.12.67 perhaps at 2359 hrs!! Paul"

The emails continued, but I finally submitted - "During the 1966 to 1971 period of the Vietnam War, Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery became the longest continuing Detachment in the Royal Australian Artillery having been deployed for five years and two months (1886 days). During this period 463 Locators served on a rotational basis, with some completing multiple tours with never more than 100 members in country at one time. Also, because of our Radar deployment, there were some 35 RAEME personnel attached to the Detachment who we proudly consider as members of our group and have always welcomed their involvement in our activities."

Ed - How come BE Nugent is included with RAEME - I thought he was a L/Bdr RAA??

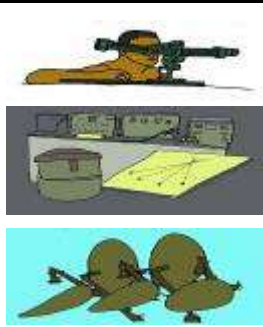
.Kevin Maker sent the following in and looks as though he wants to get geared up for the **60th Anniversary of the Raising of 131 Div. Loc** – “Boys - I'll put my 2 bobs worth in here. As Secretary / Treasurer of the Locators Association in the Hunter Valley and wanting to organise a function we have \$ 500.00 - that's all I can spend. I can't borrow against what may happen in the future, what interest the bank may pay me only my \$500.00 dollars is what matters. However I am pleased to announce that the Newcastle & Hunter Valley Branch shall be hosting the 60th Anniversary of the Raising of 131 Div. Loc. Bty RAA in **Maitland on Saturday the 9th of June 2012**.

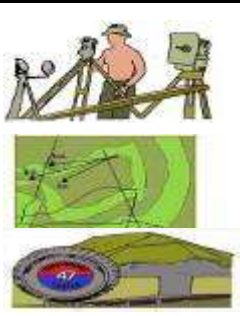
Please take the liberty to spread the date far and wide and would love to see as many as possible former locators and serving members in attendance.

Ken, Wheels Kevin Browning and I are currently seeking the services of a very special guest for the night more info available when it comes to hand

If at all possible that those interested in the dinner advise me by email or telephone of their expression of interest of attending by the **end of January 2012** so that a suitable venue may be booked. The expression of interest is not binding as things can and do change without notice – Regards "Soul". “

Contact details for “Soul” are: kevinmaker@hotmail.com Ph 02 49 342172 Mob 0408 946 224.



Committee members: **President** – Allen Morley,
Tresurer/Secretary – Grahame Dignam, **Public Officer** – Victor Danko,
Webmaster – Bob Billiards, **Research Officer** – Ernie Newbold,
General members – Ian Amos, Ged Carroll, George Lane.
Eyes & Ears Editor – Paul Dickson
Regional Representatives: **ACT** – Bert Blink, **Qld** – Terry Erbs, **SA** - Geoff Blackwell, **Vic** (Melb) – Alan Adams,
WA - Barry Guzder



A Festive Year-end word from the Pres - The end of the first year of full operation of 131 Locators Association is rapidly approaching. Looking back we see that new 131 contacts have been made and reinforced. Our numbers attending Anzac Day events are increasing. Sadly we have also lost some of our number. Vale 131 gunners. However, readership of *Eyes and Ears* continues to grow, which is indicative that what we did four decades ago and subsequently, remains of interest. While the demand remains your Committee will seek to continue to satisfy that demand.



2011 with head-warmer

The 131 Locators Association website is almost ready to make its appearance. That is much overdue, but I am sure the wait will be more than worthwhile. On behalf of the Association Committee I extend best wishes for a safe and happy Christmas to all readers of *Eyes and Ears*. May your collective aches and pains be carried into the New Year with dignity and in as positive a manner as possible. **Allen Morley** - President, 131 Locators Association.



1968 not needing the “head-warmer”

The association would also like to welcome both **Ross Gunnell** and **Kevin Browning** for fronting up and having their cheques cashed and becoming Financial Members

. Birthdays in the Battery...January – Kevin Browning clocked up 602 days in-country!

January	Name	Regt No	Y o B	In SVN	Out SVN	Comments
1	VICTOR DANKO	2783210	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
1	JOE LIBRIZZI	5716081	1947	23 09 1969	04 06 1970	
1	CHRIS CHAPPLE	5716208	1948	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	
1	RICHARD CHAPLIN	2791166	1948	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	

2	JOHN BROWNE	218367	1949	27 08 1969	13 08 1970	
3	GARY NAVAS	2793162	1949	30 05 1970	26 05 1971	
4	PETER PETTIFORD	3792038	1947	08 11 1968	04 06 1969	
5	GRAEME SMITH	6708707	1946	12 04 1968	20 08 1968	
6	ARTHUR DOVE	217348	1950	13 01 1969	28 11 1969	
6	ALLAN ROBOTHAM	6709864	1950	25 05 1971	18 11 1971	
9	PETER SADLER	15138	1941	20 05 1966	28 04 1967	† 2008
9	ROBERT NESS	4717755	1945	20 05 1966	30 04 1967	
9	GERARD PIRES	5717069	1949	03 03 1971	12 08 1971	
11	PAUL TRAVERS Maj.	47027	1940	{09 09 1965	19 09 1965	VISIT
	" "			{25 02 1967	04 04 1967	RAEME
11	PETER PIORO	2790931	1948	27 11 1969	04 05 1970	
12	PETER HOPPER Sgt	3787938	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
12	DAVID REILLY	3794901	1948	24 03 1970	13 08 1970	
12	BRIAN JOHNSON	4720991	1949	29 05 1970	05 05 1971	AACC
	" "			14 05 1970	27 05 1970	1st Armoured Regt.
12	LASZLO FALKAI	4721836	1949	03 03 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "			30 06 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd REGT.
13	ROGER HOLMES	3795910	1948	22 07 1970	25 02 1971	
15	PHIL. ENDICOTT	2783419	1945	06 01 1967	27 09 1967	
16	EDWARD COOPER	44231	1950	26 08 1969	21 01 1970	
16	LESLIE SAURINE	2791863	1947	24 03 1970	17 12 1970	
18	PETER SZABO	38752	1947	26 03 1969	25 03 1970	
19	BARRY HEARD	3788324	1945	02 04 1967	25 10 1967	Honorary 131
19	PETER FIELDEN	3797872	1949	25 11 1970	12 08 1971	
21	DON McNICOL	216327	1945	{12 09 1967	17 09 1968	131
	" "			{09 04 1970	02 05 1970	VISIT
22	KEVIN BROWNING Sgt	217743	1948	16 09 1968	24 09 1969	131
	" "			05 04 1971	29 06 1971	131
	" "			30 06 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd REGT.
22	MICHAEL BARLOW	2792252	1949	19 08 1970	11 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
23	DONALD CHALMERS	3793171	1945	01 07 1969	03 12 1969	
24	TERENCE ERBS	3791713	1947	28 10 1968	04 06 1969	
24	DAVID NEGUS	3794728	1947	24 02 1970	13 08 1970	
25	WALLY FRANKLIN	1411285	1949	29 01 1968	28 01 1969	
26	RAY HUTCHINSON	37669	1940	17 04 1967	02 04 1968	
26	GEOFFREY TODD	54254	1943	18 12 1967	10 12 1968	
27	ALAN ADAMS	3788792	1945	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	
29	PETER MACKIE	2184557	1949	20 08 1970	08 02 1971	
30	ALAN McDONALD	511355	1947	05 12 1967	03 12 1968	
31	COLIN GORDON	16975	1945	15 03 1968	26 03 1969	† 28.03.10

Ed – 20 blokes still NOT accounted for!

. Locator Profiles – we’ve received **73** (still got 5 awaiting photos) and we’ve sent out **68**. **Ron Boaler** gave us a really good insight into his life as No.067, then 068 with **Kevin Salter’s** name attached made a great read.

Rieny Niewenhoff makes a comment about **Ron Boaler’s** Profile – “Hi Paul - How coincidental, the latest profile of Ron Boaler was interesting. Ron left SVN on the very day (11.2.71) when I arrived. Maybe he took off in the same plane I had arrived on??? Rieny”

. Found.....well, more like reconnected...

Here’s an extract from the initial email from **Bill Slape** – “Hi Paul - This is not a big deal just normal work stuff with the greatest Police Teams of Aust, Brits, Dutch and Kiwi. They were just magnificent and the work rate and ethic of these teams had to be seen to be believed. Just wonderful they had me as part of this team.

Lofty Hayes - Very sad to see Lofty depart our ranks he was always a character amongst us.

Kim (Kim McGrath) - Can you send me Kim’s email please.

Cheers, Bill Slape

Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum, Sai Yok, Kanchanaburi Province, THAILAND”

...**"Houston we have connection"**...a reply from Kim – "Hi Paul, No sweat Mate, I'll contact Bill – we go back awhile. Ubique, Kim"

David Dougherty has been found and sent in a reply to **ED** – "Hi Paul, Thanks for your prompt reply. Have had grandkids staying so time has been at a premium plus hectic. Sorry for misinterpreting your intents with the dates. In the past I had looked at a number of people I knew and there is a fair proportion of those who served more than the "MAXIMUM 12 MONTHS". Another item and I don't know if it is a record but we had 3 members from Cronulla in the unit for a period of about 8 months, Geoff Holden, Ian Amos and me. I went to school with Ian's brother and my mother played golf with the Holdens, principally I think the elder brother & Martin? Your offer of being put on the mailing list is appreciated. Regards, David"
Ed – The "Shire Boys" are a unique Band of Brothers – great.

.Vale –

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Regt No</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>SVN</u>	<u>DOB</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Hayes, Terence "Lofty" James	Bdr	214973	Alpha Radar	04.05.66 – 28.04.67 10.12.68 – 10.12.69	17.11.39	14.12.11

May he rest in peace

Kim McGrath sent the photo on the right -
"Lofty was 72 and in the photo at right are "Lofty", me and Keith Ayliffe at the Coffs Harbour Reunion in October 2011."



"Lofty" was a NSW country boy from Wee Waa and as an ARA Member served 2 tours in SVN totalling 726 days.

Barry Campton emailed this – "Hello Paul - I have fond memories of "Lofty" towering above national servicemen giving the impression that he was the boss. A gentle giant, he will be missed on the locating scene. Please pass on my condolences to the family. Kind Regards Barry"

George Lane adds – "I saw Lofty at the Coffs reunion and knew he wasn't well, I also just received a Christmas card from Lofty & Ethel on Thursday in Lofty's distinguished handwriting, I feel privileged to have known him and also to have served with him. I feel proud to have called him friend. He will be missed greatly. George."

Kevin Browning adds more – "Paul - Certainly sad news about Lofty, one of the true legends of locating. Here are a couple of yarns you might like to include in the next Eyes and Ears.

I first met Lofty in 1967 and he certainly stood out amongst everyone because of his height and easy to get along with personality. Our paths crossed many times but some lighter moments stand out in my mind.

In 1970 we were both single Bombardiers living in at Holsworthy. Duties came thick and fast at that time with the Battery having to provide a duty NCO (Bdr) for both the Regimental Guard on the front gate and one for the battery Duty NCO. Lofty had been out on leave over the weekend and had met a young lady whom he asked to go to the movies on Tuesday night. The duty roster didn't come out until Tuesday morning and you guessed it, Lofty was Battery Duty NCO that night, I scored the Wednesday. He asked if I would mind swapping which we did and so that night he went out and I stood duty. Next morning we were both on parade and Lofty was called off parade to report to the BSM, Steve 'Black Dog' Rawlings. We hadn't sought his permission for the swap so what was on? Next moment out they come and it is announced Bdr Hayes had been promoted Sergeant and was taken off to the Sergeants Mess. That night whilst he enjoyed the new power I enjoyed the Duty room once more.

Then in 1974 I was posted to the School of Artillery as Radar Sergeant, not bad seeing I was a surveyor, to replace Lofty who was going back to 131. We had a two week handover which was about 9 working days more than necessary. An introduction to the Armco Canaster Card Club set me up for the next year's spare moments in the Armco. Lofty being the great host he was ensured we had plenty of coffee to drink. One day in particular he was more heavy-handed than normal and to this day I believe it would have been simpler if he had simply put one spoonful of coffee into the sugar bowl rather than all the spoonfuls of sugar he put in with the coffee. I have had some questionable drinks over my time but that one was too much for me.



Nearing the 1980s and half a dozen of us Locator types are sitting around enjoying a drink and Lofty's name came up. All had fond memories of him and as the conversation went on one said "by the way what's Lofty's first name"? There was stunned silence as we looked at each other with no responses. Having known him all those years not one of us knew what it was. It took a special visit to the Orderly Room to find the answer. Lofty had and always will be affectionately known as Lofty. Regards Kevin"

Charles Brewer reminisces – "Thanks Paul – Charles Brewer here. Lofty will be missed by many of the 131 BTY group – bit of a legend really.

Would you be able to pass my regards on to Kim and Wendy (if memory serves me correctly)? Kim was a strong personality at 133 DIV LOC BTY at Belmore, and Wendy paid a significant role as part of the Recruiting Team. Those 6+ years were enjoyable, and I have great memories of them, and the people there. For me, it was Recruiting and Radar Section, which brought me into contact with Kim as a Cadre Staff member.

And – Christmas Greetings, amongst the sadness of saying "Farewell" to another of that special group - that is the Vietnam Vets – especially the Locators. Ubique Charles Brewer.

Ex - 7 FD Regt RAA, Willoughby/Dee Why, 2 TRG GP OCTU, Ingleburn, and 133 Div Loc Bty, Belmore."



Left: "Lofty"



Right: Lawrie,
"Lofty", Ron

Steve Boutlis has some very fond memories - "Hi, Dicko. I was shocked to learn of Lofty's death, especially as he looked and sounded well at this year's reunion at Coffs. We enjoyed a chat while "making a contribution to The Community's Amenities Improvement Fund".

Having arrived at the Dat on the second day of January '67, I was a contemporary of Lofty's, and actually was posted to the radar section (Bravo?) on West side of the old highway, that Lofty was a part of. He took me and other gunners out on numerous "clearing patrols" morning and night and brought us back safe. He may not have been the most disciplined NCO but he took his duties seriously and made sure that we did things right. Perhaps having a smoke break halfway through the duration of the patrol was not the most SAS type action, but it was a lot more disciplined than the Septic Tanks with their boom boxes on top of their weapons, held over their shoulders, and walking within a pace of each other. They must have relied on their flack jackets! Lofty made sure that we kept good separation, weapons at port and eyes roving.

A story which is supposed to be ridgy-didge, tells of Lofty doing a "shoulder arms" with Lt. Opey. Opey was even shorter than I and Lofty was, well, pretty bloody tall, so their difference in height adds credence to the tale.

Above are a few photos, courtesy of **Raymond Smith**, of "Lofty" at the Dat.

I shall miss him.

I wish all of 131 mates a very healthy 2012.

Cheers, Boots."



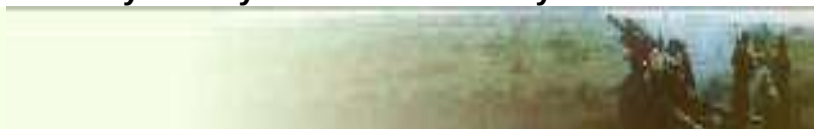
131 Locators Association is always on the lookout for new financial members. With the upcoming establishment of the web site we are going to be burdened with the ongoing cost of maintenance etc and we need to be able to support this effort equally.

So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the Eyes & Ears regularly you could bite the bullet and email **Grahame Dignam**: Sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join.

Memberships are available for 1 or 5 years. Hope we hear from you?

. Other related sites...

. Artillery Surveyors 131 Div Loc Bty...



ARTILLERY SURVEYORS 131 DIV LOC BTY

"Elements of 131 came wandering in from the bush"

(A quote whose origins are lost, yet the sentiments expressed will not be lost on many who served with 131 Div Loc Bty SVN.)

This website seeks to make contact with the Artillery Surveyors of 131 Div Loc Bty. We welcome your relevant contributions of photos, insights and observances so we might endeavour to expand 131 Artillery Surveying Vietnam record, beyond this window. Please use the [contacts page](http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/) for details: <http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/>
<http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/operations/coburg.html>

Ed – it's worth having a look at the Surveyors' websites above as they cover Operation Coburg in some very interesting detail.

. Locating Artillery Association...



LOCATING ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield

The next Meeting will be held at Paddington RSL on **19 February 2012**. Members are cordially invited to attend. Details of scheduled Committee meetings will be available in the next issue of the *Associations Newsletter LOCREP*.
Web address: <http://www.locatingartillery.org>



Website link - <http://www.vvaa.org.au/>



Website link - <http://www.dva.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx>

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

The Dept of Veteran's Affairs has launched a new mental health initiative to assist veteran's experiencing the affects of mental illness and their families. Providing information and fact sheets about understanding mental illness, links and contact information for accessing support, and online resources for health professionals, this website focuses on helping veterans identify early warning signs of mental illness to effectively manage their mental illness and seek treatment. For more info or to access, please visit www.at-ease.dva.gov.au

. 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...



Dedicated to the men of the 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery who served in Vietnam from 1966-1971. We left Fort Sill in October 1966 for Vietnam. We originally were at Bear Cat, Nui Dat and Xuan Loc. We later were in many other locations in Vietnam. We also welcome our Australian and New Zealand Allies to whom we owe so much.

It is also dedicated to those members of the 1/83rd who did not return. We will never forget their sacrifice. Website: http://83rd_artillery.home.comcast.net/~83rd_artillery/

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

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