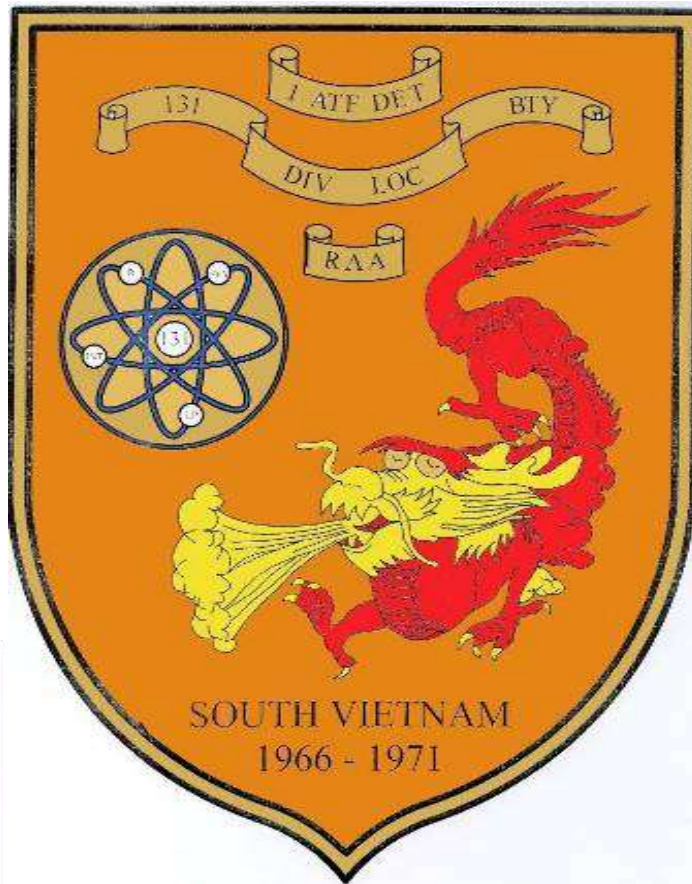
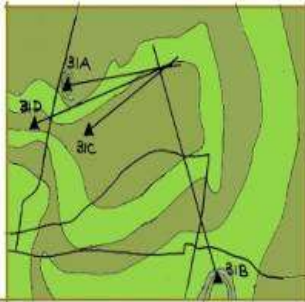
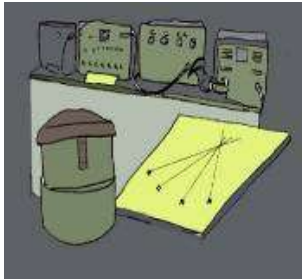


THE EYES and EARS

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

Editor: Paul 'Dicko' Dickson

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Vol. 4 No. 5 – 31/05/2011

Official newsletter of the **131 Locators Association Inc**
ABN 92 663 816 973

Supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs

. 4th May, 1966

- The remainder of the very first 1ATF Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA departed Australia for SVN in 1966 from Richmond RAAF Base aboard a QANTAS chartered flight.

. May, 1968

– Fire Support Base Coral – Balmoral

Ed – the following is a brief synopsis of the FSB activity in May 1968 taken from the AWM and other sources...

- . The biggest unit level battle of the Viet Nam war that involved Aussies.**
- . It lasted for 26 days, 12 May to 6 June 1968 and was made up of several actions.**
- . It cost more Aussie lives than the battle of Long Tan.**
- . Aussie artillery "lost" a gun for a short period and also fired over "open sights" (point blank, directly to front). Neither of these things had happened to any British Commonwealth artillery since the Boer war. The gun was recaptured.**
- It all took place in Area of Operations Surfers and was instrumental in protecting Saigon and or Bien Hoa air base from attack by the NVA Units involved**

. Fire Support Base Coral, Bien Hoa Province, Vietnam.

. 13 May 1968. The 105mm M2A2 howitzer, No. 6 gun of 102 Field Battery, 12th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery (RAA), and two members of the gun crew, on the morning after the first series of attacks on Fire Support Base (FSB) Coral by troops of the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA) 7th Division.

This position was temporarily overrun by the NVA on the night of the 12/13 May 1968 and the gun was seriously damaged by a satchel charge and the gun was withdrawn for repair. The identity of the two soldiers is unknown.

During the "Mini-Tet" offensive mounted by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in May 1968, the 1st Australian Task Force deployed two battalions to an area twenty kilometres north of Bien Hoa city to intercept and disrupt the approach of enemy forces towards the capital, Saigon, or the Bien Hoa-Long Binh base complex. Several fire support bases (FSBs) were established to provide defended firing points for artillery and mortars which would cover foot patrols to be sent out by the battalions (1 and 3 RAR). One of these FSBs was dubbed "Coral", situated seven kilometres north of the town of Tan Uyen.

Occupation of Coral was begun on **12 May**, but the defences remained unfinished when, **at about 3.30 am on 13 May**, it was attacked following a brief but intense rocket and mortar barrage. The 1RAR mortar platoon position was over-run, along with one of the 102 Field Battery's six 105 mm M2A2 howitzers in the base. With the aid of extensive air support, the attack was beaten off by 6.30 am and the captured gun-pit was retaken - still with the gun in it (this howitzer is now in the Memorial's collection).

At 2.15 am on 16 May Coral again came under attack, this time from a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force estimated at three battalions strong. The base was now defended by armoured personnel carriers of A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, and 1RAR's rifle companies, all of which were heavily engaged; part of the A Company position was occupied for a period, but the enemy was forced to withdraw. The attack was repelled after four hours of fighting, with the Australians having suffered five men killed and nineteen wounded. Two members of an American battery which had reinforced the base were also wounded. Only 34 enemy bodies were recovered, but blood trails and drag marks indicated that many more casualties had been removed.

On 22 May Coral was subjected to yet another rocket and mortar barrage, but this time the NVA troops were dispersed by return fire from 1RAR's mortars as they formed up to attack. Although there were further bombardments on **26 and 28 May**, and patrols sent out from the base came into contact with the enemy, Coral was not seriously threatened again. During fighting on **26 May** the base's defenders even turned the tables on the NVA by sending a troop of Centurion tanks from C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment (which had arrived as reinforcements three days earlier), outside the perimeter wire with infantry support; these engaged and destroyed most of a NVA bunker system that had been discovered.

Enemy efforts on **26 May** were primarily focused on another FSB named "Balmoral", which was established about 4.5 kilometres further north on **24-25 May** by 3RAR supported by tanks. The defenders easily threw back assaults launched against Balmoral on **26 and 28 May**. On the latter occasion, the attacking NVA regiment lost at least 42 killed and seven prisoners, but again casualties were thought to have been higher. One Australian was killed and six wounded.

...and Ed continues on with a couple of things...

Being back in Aus and being able to access some of my meagre library, I thought now was as good a time as any to re-acquaint myself with Lex McAulay and his "The Battle of Coral – Vietnam Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral, May 1968" (Lex also wrote "The Battle of Long Tan" – another good read).



I've adapted his map (on the left) of the area of conflict and pasted it here. It's amazing how far north the FSB's were – the other side of Bien Hoa.

It was also fascinating to read some names I've now met - John Dellaca, plus Ken "Bluey" Piesley and Jeff Bassford who are on our email list, then Stan "Pablo" Briggs who I knew back in the 131 days, but we can't seem to track him down.

Heard and seen...

. John Brown has dug up a real curiosity – "Hi Paul, Found a patch on an internet site that was supposedly used by some 131 guys in the mid 60's. I'm attaching a pic of it. Is there any chance that someone may know what the colours were on this patch? If anyone knows, get them to email me would you? I'd like to make one up. (I collect militaria, and it would complete my 131 board) Thanks, John"



Ed – Can we get some help to identify this – this may even stump NOT only Ernie, but Keith Ayliffe as well?

. Keith Ayliffe submits a really interesting article – "G'day Paul Just something I thought your members might be interested in..... Hope everything is going well Best regards Keith"...

"I WAS ONLY 19 – THE JOHN SCHUMANN STORY

1968. I was in Year 10 at Blackfriars Prior School in South Australia, grappling with Latin and the Periodic Table. The war in Vietnam was escalating and more and more young Australian men were being shipped off to Asia. Jumpy, black and white television reports of the war were broadcast nightly to an increasingly agitated nation and Mum took to looking at me anxiously when she thought I wasn't watching.

In truth, I hadn't really thought too much about being sent to Vietnam but, as a naïve 15 year old with a penchant for camping and bushwalking, the idea was not entirely unattractive. And, besides, there was a history of war service in my family. Grand-dad had been a marksman on minesweepers in World War One. Dad was in the RAAF stationed in the Northern Territory during World War Two and most of his mates had seen active service in one theatre or another.

My mother, on the other hand, was far from comfortable with the idea of her boy going to Vietnam. I was asthmatic from the time I was about nine years old but after 1965 she insisted on taking me to the doctor after every attack. It wasn't till much later that my mother told me she was laying a paper trail in the event my "marble came up".

St Therese's Catholic parish in Colonel Light Gardens was the sort of close-knit community that is, lamentably, a thing of the past. When Private Robert Caston was killed in Vietnam in the February of 1968, the war crashed out of our television sets and into our very lives. Robert's younger brother, Phillip, was in my class at St Therese's Primary

School so this was close. The parish went into deep shock and our mothers, redeyed and distracted for weeks, rallied around the Caston family with meals and deep sympathy. When my own brother died of leukaemia a couple of years later, Mrs Caston put her arms around Mum at the graveside. Of all Mum's friends, only Robert's mother really understood...

As we all did, I had a couple of mates, older boys, who did go to Vietnam. They left as wide-eyed, grinning Australian lads, pushing and shoving and joking at their embarkation leave parties. They were returned to us as damaged goods - sullen, disconnected and with the trade-mark "thousand yard stare". They were now in another, older, gang and I wasn't a member. Some drank with a desperation that those of us who stayed behind couldn't share. In the ensuing years I watched alcoholism set in and I watched friendships and relationships fracture. Unemployment, too, set in. One veteran mate explained this many years later:

"Just imagine," he said. "One day you're helping get your dying mate into a Huey, while your other mates are throwing out covering fire. Two weeks later, you're in a public service office somewhere being told by some pasty-faced, cardigan-wearing mincer not to put your lunch box on the middle shelf of the staff fridge because that's where Mrs Brown likes to put her cat food. Is it any wonder we didn't slip back easily into civilian life? And lots of people were deeply suspicious of us anyway - as we were of them."

One time a friend of a friend had signed up for a second tour of duty so he was granted some leave in Australia. For some reason the three of us went for a drive through the Adelaide Hills and the young soldier insisted on taking the wheel. I'd never been so scared in my entire life. Sitting in the back of the HK Holden while he thrashed up Upper Sturt Rd in second gear. I ventured that he was driving dangerously. He laughed, rather nastily, and told me I didn't know what danger was. All these things tend to stay with you. There but for the grace of God go I.

As the new decade warmed up, the popular movement against the Vietnam war gained traction. It wasn't too long before a clear majority of Australians, including me, opposed it. The Liberal Government started to wind back the military commitment and Australian soldiers came dribbling home. In the December of 1972 Gough Whitlam was elected and within days conscription was abolished and Australia's military commitment to the Vietnam war had been terminated. Vietnam became yesterday's issue and student activists cast around for other, more pressing causes. In 1975, as part of my undergraduate degree in Philosophy and English at Flinders University, I enrolled in Politics and Art, a course that examined the nature of the relationship between art, politics and society. Taught by a man who was to become a lifelong friend, Professor Brian Medlin, this course germinated the seedling that grew into Redgum. I learned that I could write songs and, for a committed student of the Left, I also learned there was much to write about.

By the late 1970s, the war in Vietnam had slipped well into the background. However, in 1979 I began to read of a group called the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

The VVAA was raising health issues on behalf of veterans, in the face of government intransigence and RSL antipathy. As the media coverage increased, so did my sympathy for these veterans. The songwriter in me could well imagine returning from an unpopular war, sick and confronting a government and a society that didn't want to know. I entertained the idea of writing these blokes a song but, for me, there was one major stumbling block: Vietnam veterans were a notoriously closed circle. Approach a group of veterans having a drink and a yarn and they'd clam up as soon as you drew near. For my part, I was disinclined to write a song this important on the basis of my some media reports and my imagination.

In late 1981 I met Denny, the woman who was to become my wife, at a dinner party in Adelaide. As our relationship unfolded, we swapped family histories and stories. I discovered that her brother, Mick, had been in Vietnam. Further, he'd been involved in a serious mine incident in 1969 in which a couple of his mates were killed and a number seriously injured. In time I met Denny's family, including Mick. He and I seemed to get along pretty well but I avoided the issue of his Vietnam service until one night after a Redgum concert at the Oxford Theatre in suburban Unley. This was shortly before Christmas 1981. After the gig we all went out for a drink and Mick and I were discussing songs and song writing. I confided in him my desire to write a song about Vietnam veterans and, on a whim, I asked Mick if he'd be prepared to talk to me and help with some of the detail. Given that Denny had told me several times that Mick didn't ever talk about Vietnam, I was quite surprised when he agreed. There were, however, two conditions. The first was that I didn't denigrate his mates. Easy. It was never my intention. Secondly, Mick insisted that I played any song I wrote to him first. If he didn't approve, the song was not to see the light of day. I agreed.

In the January of 1982 Redgum went on tour. By this time we'd moved camp to Melbourne, however after two months or more on the road I was in need of some Adelaide respite. I went back home and hid at Denny's place at Cherry Gardens in the Adelaide Hills for a couple of weeks. It was during this little sabbatical that I invited Mick up to Denny's place to see if we could have the yarn he'd promised me. It was a long night. Mick brought with him a carton of beer and a small cardboard box containing his Vietnam memorabilia - photographs, slides a couple of badges, a map and a few bits and pieces. We watched the slides, looked at the photos, drank the beer and talked: rather, I interviewed him. Mick's story was graphic enough, all right,

but I pushed him for detail – sights, sounds, smells, feelings. Denny had set up her cassette recorder for me and I filled around nine 60-minute cassettes.

I had no idea what I was going to do with these tapes but I listened to them over and over for weeks and weeks on end - in cars, planes, hotel rooms and dressing rooms. Months later, one November Sunday morning, I took a cup of coffee, my guitar, a pad and a biro into the tiny backyard of the house in Carlton I shared with my friend, David Sier. Sometimes songs take months to write. Sometimes they just tumble out. I reckon I wrote "I Was Only 19" in 15 minutes. It was like it'd already been written. As proud as I am of "19", that morning I felt as if I was little more than a conduit.

As agreed, I played the song to Mick first at a pre-Christmas meal at his other sister's place in Belair. He didn't say much; just "You'd better go and see Frankie". I had to ask Mick several times if this meant I could present it to the band and start including it in the set list.

The rest is well-documented history. On the coastal tour of January 1983, I sought Frankie Hunt out in Bega. I played him the song over and over until my fingers were so sore that I begged to be allowed to sing it into his cassette player. About a week later, in Sydney, I met a very intimidating Phil Thompson, VVAA President, along with Tim McCombe, Terry Loftus and Graham Walker. Sadly Phil is dead but the rest of the blokes are still good mates.

The next day I played "19" to the then CEO of CBS Records, an American called Bob Jamieson. He and his executive team threw immense support and resources behind the project and facilitated my wish that the artist's royalties be funnelled through to the VVAA. And after I recorded the song in Melbourne, Frank Hunt joined me in Sydney and he and I did endless media interviews together.

In the months before its release in March 1983, many, many other people swung in behind the project, veterans and non-veterans alike. For the hundreds of thousands of Australians who bought the record, I suspect it was a way of saying sorry: - "...sorry we didn't think how us marching down city streets protesting must have looked to you from the paddy-fields of Vietnam: sorry we didn't stop to ask you how you were feeling when you came home: sorry we didn't understand that this was a different war from the one our fathers fought: sorry we didn't pay attention when you tried to tell us you were crook: sorry we let the government work you over. Sorry."

The Hawke Government was elected in March 1983, and promised a Royal Commission into the effects of herbicides and insecticides on Vietnam veterans. In October 1987 Australia finally threw our Vietnam veterans a Welcome Home Parade.

Any number of people will tell you that "I Was Only 19" was instrumental in these things. Maybe. Maybe not. It's not for me to say. What the song did, in my view though, was demonstrate to Australians that you can oppose a war vigorously but still be supportive and respectful of the men and women the government sends to fight it. In this, I think Australia has changed quite dramatically.

Over the years Frankie Hunt, has assumed a prominence with regard to "I Was Only 19" that is understandable, if not entirely justified. The fact is that it's Mick Storen's story.

Over 20 years later, it's easy to forget just what sort of courage and trust Mick Storen displayed when he told his story, outside the closed circle, to a songwriter in a politically outspoken band.

For me, "I Was Only 19" has been an amazing gift. You can't imagine what a pleasure it is to be recognised out of the blue by a veteran or a veteran's family member and be thanked so warmly and genuinely. You can't imagine what it's like to be an honorary part of the veteran community, knowing you have a bunch of mates who'll be there for you when the wind's blowing in the wrong direction.

There's no amount of money or success that even comes close. **Author - John Schumann August 2006**

. A curiosity from Ed...

– At the moment I'm madly trying to archive photos and a whole lot of other stuff and I've come across a bit of an "Aladdin's Cave". I thought I might start in this edition with a couple of classics...

First up the eventful day arrived when I got a letter from the "Commonwealth of Australia – Department of Labour and National Service" (where did that combination come from?).

I think getting me to turn up for my medical before the Medical Board at 1830hrs was their first mistake – I finished work at about 1700hrs and this did allow me time for a couple of XXXX's.

Can you believe that 12 days later they let me know that I had "been found to meet the standards required" – they must have been short on for drunks! Then they added that I make sure to keep the week commencing 18th April clear, and oh, say goodbye to someone and let your Mum know that you may not be home for regular meals for 2 years!

That bloke “Bland” who signed the letters must have gone through a few pens, though I don’t think that he actually signed it.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Mr. Paul Grenville DICKSON,
32 Windsor Avenue,
LUTWICH.

National Service
Registration Office
Royal Exchange Building,
70-72 Eagle St.,
BRISBANE.
14th March, 1966.

Registration No. 3009618

Dear Sir,

I am writing to tell you that you have been found to meet the standards required and therefore fit for service and that, in the normal course of events, you will be required to commence your national service with the Army during the week beginning 18th April, 1966.

Further advice will be sent to you at your registered address giving full details of the date, time and place at which you are to report for service.

If you are in employment you should inform your employer now that you have received this advance notice but you should not make arrangements to leave work until you are advised of the time when you are required to report for service. If you leave your employment before you are required to report you may forfeit rights you may have to reinstatement in your employment upon return from service.

If you wish to claim that the rendering of service would impose exceptional hardship upon yourself, or your parents, or your dependants, you must make application in accordance with the prescribed form which can be obtained at this office or at any District Employment Office of the Commonwealth Employment Service. Such an application will then be heard and determined by a Magistrate in accordance with the provisions of the National Service Act. An application must be posted or delivered so as to reach me at this office within fourteen days after you receive this letter. A late application can be accepted only if it contains a statement showing that it could not reasonably have been posted or delivered within the prescribed time or that the grounds for the application arose after that time.

At the Magistrate's hearing you may be represented by counsel, solicitor or duly authorized agent. Court fees will not be charged but you will be responsible for any costs you incur in regard to your representation.

If, between now and the date when you are required to report for service, you should sustain an injury or contract an illness which may affect your fitness for service, please forward immediately to me at the above address, the necessary details supported by a medical certificate.

Yours faithfully,

H. A. BLAND
(H. A. BLAND)
Secretary

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

Mr. Paul Grenville DICKSON,
32 Windsor Avenue,
LUTWICH, Brisbane.

National Service Registration Office,
Royal Exchange Building,
70/72 Eagle St.,
Brisbane.
2nd March, 1966.

In my reply, please quote your
Registration No. 3009618

Dear Sir,

I am writing to inform you, in relation to your liability to call-up for national service, that you are required, in accordance with the provisions of the National Service Act, to submit yourself to medical examination before a Medical Board.

You are therefore required to attend for this purpose at Combined Services Recruiting Centre, 130 Mary St., Brisbane at 6.30p.m. on the 11th day of March 1966.

At the same time you will be interviewed with regard to your suitability for the various postings in the Army and other matters concerning national service. Would you, therefore, please bring with you any documents you have, such as certificates etc., relating to your educational or occupational qualifications.

You should also bring this letter and your Certificate of Registration, and your marriage certificate if you are married. If you wear glasses be sure to have them with you.

Please be punctual so as to avoid inconvenience not only to yourself but also to others who will be attending at the same time.

If, because of illness or other quite unavoidable circumstances, you should be unable to attend at the time stated, or if you will be temporarily absent from the district and it would be more convenient to arrange for an examination elsewhere, please advise me immediately so that other arrangements can be made. It is in your own interests to do so, because failure to comply with this notice or to submit to medical examination is an offence under the National Service Act.

After the examination you will be advised in writing whether or not you will be called up for service.

Yours faithfully,

H. A. BLAND
(H. A. BLAND)
Secretary

NOTE:
Arrangements will be made, at the time of your medical examination, to refund approved expenses incurred by you in reporting for examination.
A travel warrant is attached which you should present to the transport authority where you sit. If you do not use this warrant, please return it when you report for medical examination.

Then after a bit more looking I came across my “Soldier’s Paybook” (F-WF5 revised in Oct 1965 complete with “Instructions to Soldier”) and I noted after commencing on the “princely” sum of \$4.88 per day in April 1966 I was rewarded for my endeavours by being paid \$5.80 per day in 1967 at my peak with an additional \$1.55 for being in South Vietnam. A Government sponsored trip and I get more pay!

INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLDIER

1. This book contains the instructions to the soldier for the use of the paybook. It is to be used by the soldier at all times when he is on duty.

2. The soldier must keep this book in good condition and must not allow it to be damaged or lost.

3. The soldier must keep this book in good condition and must not allow it to be damaged or lost.

4. The soldier must keep this book in good condition and must not allow it to be damaged or lost.

5. The soldier must keep this book in good condition and must not allow it to be damaged or lost.

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9. The soldier must keep this book in good condition and must not allow it to be damaged or lost.

10. The soldier must keep this book in good condition and must not allow it to be damaged or lost.

SOLDIER'S PAYBOOK

ARMY No. 1732012

SURNAME DICKSON

OTHER NAMES Paul Grenville

RELIGION C of E

TAX CONCESSIONAL REDUCTIONS

1961/62

SPECIAL ALLOWANCE APPROXIMATE NOTIFIED BY CAP

Allow	Daily Rate	W.E.F.	Daily Rate	W.E.F.
MA				
PA				
LOA				

THIS PAYBOOK WAS ISSUED BY
PAYMASTER No. 20 on 12/4/66
DATE

SIGNATURE OF PAYMASTER

Hey, I’m not complaining – I was supplied with a range of clothing (to suit all sorts of activities), free medical (which was handy cover for SVN – we even had an “ambo” in the scrub with us sometimes to complement the pack of bandages we carried – I taped mine to my SLR – really cool as long as you didn’t put the butt in the mud or just get it wet), free dental (if you were game), all meals (eat-in or take away – picnic stuff for the bush camping trips as well) and of course accommodation for all types of terrain and climates (luckily I’d shared a room with my brother when I was 7 – however, that was only one person and I don’t remember him snoring, farting or getting up in the middle of the night to get on duty or coming back to wake me up to do the same!) And then, how about stumbling about in the dark

trying to find the bloody “hutchie” so as you could wake someone up, generally by standing on them, to go and man a weapon and just peer into the blackness!

While at work I was given transport in varying modes to get to locations to complete my job (sleeping in a parcel rack on the train to Exercise Barra Winga north of Rockhampton was a real treat), though at times there was a lot of walking involved (sometimes a few of us abreast - where you had keep in some sort of step or get yelled at, or step on the bloke's heels in front – sometimes in single file carrying a firearm and trying not to step on a twig or something more nefarious, or on less formal occasions held up by two mates staggering along in the dark – possibly all three of us a little worse for the over indulgence of the local brew).

The Soldier's Paybook also showed where I allocated funds to a bank account at home, so that along with thousands cigarettes, countless bottles of booze was an addition to the festivities when I got back to Brisbane in December '67.

Ah, I wouldn't have missed it for quids!



And bugger me; the photo on the left is the one in the back of the paybook that bloody John Vitkovsky drew a moustache and goatee on! Even my mother would have been scared by that!

...then there are more curiosities that I dug up, which I'll add next month.

. **Our “Concerned, Sydney”** is back on the “soap box” again with a detailed investigation on a photo in which it is purported to contain Joe Clendinen vs. Ray Hutchinson at a bbq with Patti McGrath and Denise Drysdale in 1967. Read on...



“Dear Ed
Since the last *Eyes and Ears* rolled off my computer I have been compiling a counter-case to your identification of one Gunner from the *Womens' Weekly* article.

I give you two photos to

support my case. The first (above on the left) is of a fine body of men about to return home in January 1968. From left to right are: John Vickary, Lionel Outen, Bob Retrot, Allen Morley, Terry Bruce, Stewart Sporn, Joe Clendinen, Max Troynar, Ernie Newbold and Sandy Saunders.

Note well the tattoo visible on Joe Clendinen's left arm.

Now the pic from the *Womens' Weekly* (above right), reproduced below: The soldier on the far right does **not** have a tattoo on his left arm **nor** is he wearing glasses. Ergo, it is **not** Joe Clendinen. It is in fact **Ray Hutchinson**, contrary to the position taken by some 131 pundits, based upon haircut interpretation!!

Sincerely Concerned, Sydney”

Ed – comments have come in suggesting that perhaps it was sometime after the pictured bbq that Joe C's eyes were affected by the bbq smoke and he was forced to wear glasses and whilst on R&R in Singapore he had his misspelt tattoo done. However, these comments are hearsay and more factual statements are required – please?

.**Rieny Nieuwenhof** sent the following in after being discovered by **Craig Cook** (see “Found” below) –

“Hi Paul,

It was so great to read the 'Eyes and Ears' Newsletter and to read the activities of so many former 131 Locators. It was a great edition - congrats and thank you.

As I read through the various names in the publication I was able to give christian names from a list of surnames and initials I have had for some time.

As I may have mentioned I was the (temporary) Bombardier for Arty Intelligence in Vietnam from Feb. - Aug. 1971. Capt. Tim Ford was CO at the time.

In the next edition I was hoping you might publish these names and someone might know their whereabouts:



Garry Carthew originally from Tamworth NSW, Len Walker originally from Ararat VIC, 'Swill' Willis originally from Yackandandah Vic, Jorg Kiene, John Homer originally Belmont WA, Barry Fountain originally Horsham Vic, Ian Campbell originally Kooyong Vic, Rod 'Scoby' Beasley originally Wycheproof Vic, Rex Arnold originally Loxton SA, Brian Markvick originally St. Agnes SA, Wayne Judd originally Coffs Harbour NSW, Garry Chillingsworth originally Manangatang Vic, Dave Pires originally Bentley WA, Les Falkai originally Windsor Gardens SA, Pete 'Fang' Fielden originally Laverton Vic, 'Holly' Holloway originally Nashville Q'Land, Joe 'Mucho' Kocka originally Paddington Q'land, Pete Saint originally Rockdale NSW and Pete Barry originally Gosford NSW

All these guys served with me in 131 Div Loc Battery.

I remember great times in Nui Dat, two cans per day per man, (going to see the 'best' movies at the SAS base), hours sitting in the LP with nothing to see or do, the long 500 card games, living in a hole in the ground and the 'outdoor' showers at the Horseshoe.

I am currently a member of the Vietnam Veterans Ass. Geelong Branch and while there are Artillery reps no-one from Locating (that I am aware of anyway) are members.

I look forward to the next edition.

When I get the technology sorted I'll send some photos.

Regards, Rieny 'Van' Nieuwenhof

Ed – along with Rieny perhaps we can get in touch with these blokes? We're already in contact with only Les Falkai.

. Bob King is making an offer which is going to be hard to pass up!

Bob with his expertise and camera equipment is offering for Members a **FREE OFFER** to convert your black and white or colour slides, negatives and photos onto a DVD.

All you have to do is send your slides, negatives or photos to Bob at:

R King PO Box 3 Baulkham Hills NSW 1755

– Please enclose a disc and pre-paid container/envelope so Bob can get them back to you.

Ed – that's bloody brilliant!

. ANZAC Day follow up by Ed (can't help himself!) to **Bruce Irvine's** item in April's E&E's –

"Bruce Thanks very much - luckily I'm running late - so it's all worked out well.

Hey - what was the significance of Bathurst and, I guess more curiously (if there is such a word!!) - Yetholme? If I don't hear from you before tomorrow I'll put a post script in May, because it's got a real feel to it.

The photos are really good and the day sounded very heart-warming to be with some very close mates.

Paul"

...and Bruce responded...

"Paul,



Bathurst was a major training Camp for WW2 and before that the Carillon was built after WW1. It was based on the design of European carillons where they are much more common. In fact there are only three in Australia that I am aware of - Sydney University, Canberra and Bathurst. The bell and keyboard arrangement is also rather different (won't describe it here - easier to look it up on the web) and one of its components is the "clapper"!

The army camp trained (I think) around 150,000 troops in WW2, with the 8th Division being one of them. Needless to say a lot finished up in Changi and we still

have two surviving POW's here. In fact we met both of them last Monday - very humbling.

The 8th Division National Memorial is in Bathurst and I was asked to help my old POW mate Les Browne lay the wreath on ANZAC Day which I considered a great honour.

Yetholme (elev.1100m) is a small village where I happen to live - that's all - 25km up the hill from Bathurst. The school used to hold ANZAC Day services for the kids. The school closed so we have kept it going and now have a memorial in the village for our services. I'll attach a photo from ANZAC Day which shows the Memorial, together my granddaughter Isabella and me laying wreaths.

Once again, I hope everybody enjoyed their day as much as we did.

...and more late ANZAC Day mail...





Al Adams sent this in of the blokes on ANZAC Day in Melbourne.

Ed – it'd be great to get some names to the faces?
Even I can pick four!

. Steve Boutlis gets in a late call from the Sunshine Coast, then some other interesting stuff as well (pay attention to the "Lofty" news) – "Hi, Dicko. I had my usual, slack, Anzac Day.

Up too early to pay my respects to all of our comrades-in-arms at the dawn service by the beach. It is organised by the Kawana Waters RSL Sub-branch and it attracted a crowd of about 2,000.

The service is reasonably brief but covers all of the traditional ceremony and is very moving listening to the crashing of the waves onto the shore as the sun rises and the bugler plays the Last Post and Rouse.

I got home and watched the last of the Currumbin dawn service with my wife, then hit the farter for a two hour kip.

Up about ten thirty and watched the Brisbane march where the "funny little lot" and others of our detachment marched behind the 131 banner.

Unfortunately, the only commentary about them was that "Detachment 131 also served in Vietnam". There was nothing else about our very important role there.

...Then,

...then,

... then IT WAS FOOTY TIME.

My day was complete, with the Mighty Magpies trouncing the courageous Bombers in the traditional AFL Anzac Day match.

One Anzac Day, I will eventually get to another march.

Then,

One of our comrades, **Graeme Smith**, is a member of Sunshine Coast VVAA, and comes in to our drop-in-centre on Friday mornings when I am looking after it. Last Friday, he told me about his Vietnam mates who served with him at Sensors (about 1970), their reunion on the day before Anzac Day at Brisbane, and the march behind our banner.

Graeme said that in Vietnam, they were referred to as "the funny-little-lot". I've asked him to send an E-mail to you and share his experiences, and explain why they were called that.

He also told me that Lofty isn't well and that he can hardly walk and thus was not marching. Anyone know more detail about Lofty?

Cheers, Boots."

Ed – can anyone give us an update on "Lofty"?

. Dave Auld sent this special email too – "Paul, me on ANZAC Day, I was given the honour of flag bearer, the legs that look like they come out of the flag belong to a Peter Steveson WW2 2/1st Survey Regt Middle East, 2/7th Survey Regt New Guinea. I've known him most of my life but only found out last year that he was one of ours. Cheers

DAVID 🌻🌻

Ed – I had to ask David where the photo was taken and he replied – "My old home town Coolah, halfway between Dubbo and Muswellbrook (west to east), halfway between Mudgee and Gunnedah (south to north).

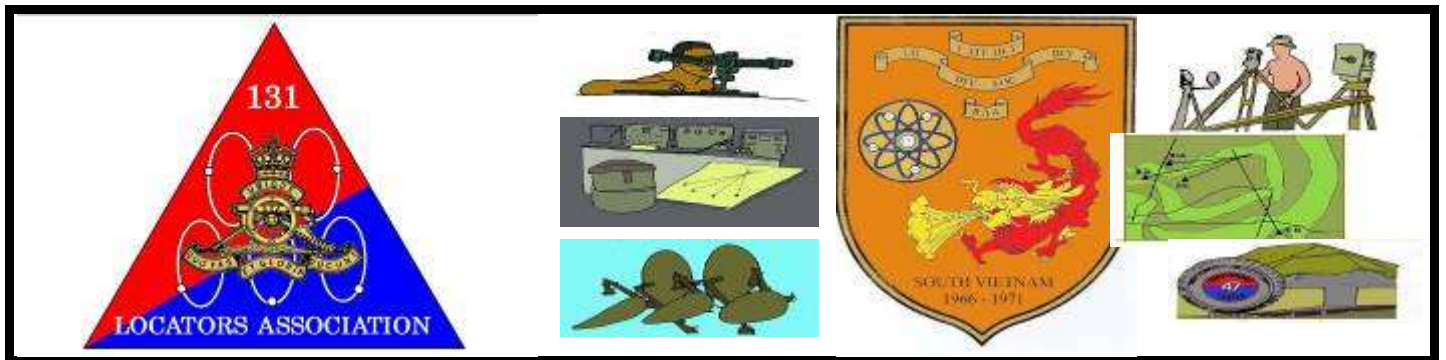


. **Keith Ayliffe**...the following is an extract from an email from KA - "G'day Dicko,
Sorry slow to get back to you, but it has been a bit hectic up here.

Anzac Day - went to dawn services with Ian Finlay (Fin) and our better halves and my youngest daughter, her hubby and my grand kids.

It was very wet. Seen in Photo Fin and his Missus (in Red Scarf) me directly behind (my Missus obscured)

Best to you Keith"



. **The Association meeting on 16th May** covered a wide range of topics –

- The aftermath of ANZAC Day brought up a subject that needs attention.

I had a couple of emails from blokes who either attended Dawn Services then went home to watch marches on TV or just settled for watching the march on TV!

These were blokes that live in Capital cities, which make it worse!

So, I'm calling for blokes who are close to ANZAC Day March organisers, or who just turn up regularly at marches, to communicate with me prior to these events and give me details of what is happening in their home/march town on the day so as I can put the details in Eyes & Ears prior to the event.

Whoever, volunteers could also become an advocate for a specific area and have input into the Association's Committee.

There are quite a few people that come to mind in varying areas – I'd be keen to hear from all and sundry.

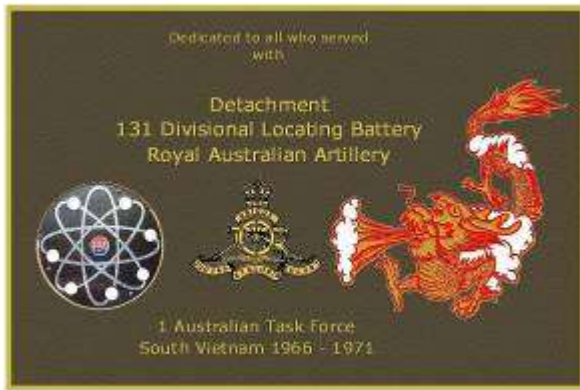
Hey, some of you go to other locations for marches etc – let us know what you're planning and God knows who or what could happen.

C'mon guys it's important that we make our day everyone's day!

...a few more points...

- Thought could also be given to a group of guys in varying areas to put their heads together, regularly, and communicate with the Committee on common interests, concerns on any range of subjects. Actually, there will be a section on the upcoming website to be used as a **"Community Noticeboard"** which will also enhance this activity. So there won't be a waiting for an email or the next issue of E&E's. It'd be great to get some input into this too?
- The **website** is slowly but surely taking place and **webmaster, Bob Billiards**, is still looking for items for content. To be more specific, he's after photos somewhere between 1 to 2 MB in size to go as banners on various pages. Photos can be sent to Bob at billiard@pnc.com.au It would be handy if he could get them in the not too distant future.

Commemorative Plaque...



Over the last couple of meetings we've established the layout for a **Commemorative Plaque** for the 1 ATF Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA which we are planning to have laid at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.



The photo on the left (above) is a copy of what the design will look like, when finalised and Nick Proskurin (in photo above right) is standing where the plaques are placed.

An email will be sent out to **Financial Members** for perusal and comments.

Actually, when the subject of funding was raised at the ANZAC Day luncheon in Sydney, one of our "66 Pioneers", **George Lane** (he'll kill me for mentioning this – and in his current state of good health could do so quite easily!) slapped \$70 down as a donation.

So **George** has started what we're continuing with – a project to seek donations to assist the funding and this can be done by getting new members to join the association with hopefully a bit of a donation and the current great bunch of blokes to throw a few more bucks our way.

Lookout Members there's an email coming to an address looking like yours soon!

However, in conjunction with this project the Committee is in the process of compiling an application for DVA Funding Assistance to help enable **Financial Members** to be able to come to Canberra and be an integral part of Ceremony.

Keep an eye out for incoming in your direction soon!

The Association is also still seeking **new Financial Members** not only for the Commemorative Plaque programme, but also to ensure the DVA that there is a continuing membership growth and interest.

. Coffs Harbour October Reunion –

DON'T let this opportunity slip – not this year!

"Hey, I reckon we should turn up this year!" – look who could make it - Dave & Rosemary Auld, Nick & Robyn Armstrong, Charles Brewer, John Browne, George Clark, Vic Danko, Peter (Pappy) and Carol Gault, Dave (Shorty) & Jane Gow, Ken & Doreen Long, Ernie Newbold, Graeme Owen (plus his better half), now how's this for a group of "Pioneers" who are going to turn up en masse - George Lane, Ged Carroll, Merv Nairn & Spike Chase (they've really thrown down the gauntlet to other groups!), **Graham Williams**

. Birthdays in the Battery...well May brings with it quite a few combinations with multiple births – just not enough days in the month!

Dennis Forster gets it all going on the 1st, Nick Armstrong gets a trifecta going with **Michael Young** and **Brett Rainsford** on the 2nd. God knows where Brian Killworth will be on the 4th as he's in the process of getting his new travelling wheels organised, makes you wonder what **Peter Robertson** is doing for his birthday on the same day, David Cornell's Mum grabbed the 5th as she didn't want to share the space in the birth's section of the paper with her future Locator, now the 8th brings a really interesting pairing of John "Beau" Roberts and Graeme "Jessie" Owen – was the nursery big enough? Ken Woodbine and Michael Quinlan are a real possibility of being twins by both being born on the 10th - even the Regt Nos are really close, though the surnames throw a bit of spanner in the cogs. There must have been something special in the water when Bob King came to life on the 11th as his passion for things photographic is still something he holds today, the Mum's of both Merv Nairn and Gordon Williams felt the earth move 12th, the late David Keech (13.05.47 – 1999) who got to make his tour initially with the "Det" in '70 transferred to the AATTV and came home in 1971 shares the date with Ken Taylor, **Leslie Connell** took his first breath on 15th in '48, I wonder if Paul Angel knew/knows **Kenneth Sanderson** (he's not on our email list) as they share the 17th and went over on 29th Sept '69, though Ken was kept in for not having clean boots and didn't get home for 2 months later (well, he was a Victorian!), Peter Colman born on the 18th went over for Christmas, but had Christmas back in Aus in '70 (hopefully not in Holsworthy), both **Dennis Dye** and **Terry Weekes** found life on the 19th but we can't find them!! One of our favourites Nick Proskurin picked up his graphic pen on the 20th closely followed by Peter Ravelje the next day and 12 months later, **Brian Turner** and **Andrew Cshivicsik** cracked it on the 22nd, Jim Sellwood got going on the

23rd, John Brewer thought being born on a Wednesday was well balanced so he popped out on the 24th, now we do have phenomenon with **Ken Whittle** and Bert Blink proposing to be twins, but Bert was born a year later and in Holland, the 28th saw **Sytse Elzinga** get going, then the 30th got a quadrella of the late Roger Long and the late Ron Webb followed by **Anthony Eaton** with Warwick Brooker being the last of that date by arriving in '46.

Ed – 13 blokes in bold can't be that hard to locate!!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received **53** and we've sent out **51**. **Ed** – We only need another 47 to get up a ton!

. **Found...**

. **John Stanford** got the following to happen – “Paul

John Stanford sent me a copy of the Eyes and Ears and it was great to see it up and running again. I recall in '67 the first copy to be printed. I did have a copy of it, but over the years I seem to have lost it. It is great to read about the Horseshoe and reason for existing. I was posted there between July and December 1967 and have great memories of the place. I have included a couple of photos you might be interested in.

Could you please add my email to your mailing list? Best regards **Greg Green** Gnr No.2784565

Ed – Greg you're added to the list. However, Greg also sent in the following photo –



Farewell drinks with some familiar faces – John Vitkovsky, Bob Retrot, Sandy Saunders, Warwick Hamilton, Pete Fletcher, the late Ian Yerbury and also the late Chalky Royal.

Ed – just a couple of comments – gee there was NO expense spared on the bar items and was Bob Retrot at every farewell? **Ernie Newbold** reckons he was, up to and including when he went home 31.01.68!

. **Craig Cook** started off the discovering of **Rieny Nieuwenhof** -

“Hi Graig, I was wondering if you could put me into contact with former members of 131 Divisional Locating Battery who served in Vietnam in 1971. Is there a person/group that might help? Rieny Nieuwenhof”

...**Craig got back with...**

“Hi Rieny, am sending this email forward to Paul Dickson who is editor of Eyes and Ears, and will certainly put you into the mag and the 131 Locators data base as you wish. Also passing onto the Loc Rep editor who can do the same there. I am sure Paul will get you linked up and may get to send you some reproduced newsletters from SVN days. Cheers and best wishes, Craig Cook ex 132 Bty”

...**Ed contacted Rieny and here's what happened...**

“Thank you Paul,

My first name is Rieny, (pronounced Reny) but while I was in the Army I had a different surname. I served with Det 131 Div Loc Battery in 1971, having come from 116 Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Woodside SA. I was commonly known as 'Van' as my surname was Van de Nieuwenhof. I was the Bdr. for Arty Intelligence.

I look forward to reading the newsletter. I would appreciate being placed on the electronic emailing list.

Thanks again for getting back to me. Rieny Nieuwenhof”

Ed – it's great to get another Locator located.

. **Al Adams** caught up with **Vaughan Millar** at the AD March in Melbourne and **Ed** got this response – ‘Dear Paul up until my meeting with Al Adams on ANZAC day 2011 (only my 2nd appearance in 40 odd years), I was unaware of the existence of Eyes and Ears and have been surprised by your very good work in keeping memories alive and in my case rekindled. I would indeed like to be included in your mail out and when appropriate contribute.

With personal thanks Vaughan (Mitch) Millar .131 SVN 1967-1968”

. After **Ian Amos** got us in touch with **Ralph Mitchell** we got the following – “Hi Paul

Thanks for putting me on the mailing list and sending me a copy of Eyes and Ears - great reading and it certainly brought back memories - especially the article about the Horseshoe.

I have to thank Ian Amos for letting you know my email address.

Look forward to the next edition. Regards Ralph Mitchell”

.Vale –

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Regt No</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>SVN</u>	<u>DoB</u>	<u>DoD</u>
Long, Roger	Gnr	3788775	Radar	1967	30.05.45	22.05.90

May he rest in peace

.Ken Taylor advised us of the passing of **Tim Ford's** father in the following emails forwarded to the Association -

"Gentlemen

Sadly the Representative Colonel Commandant MAJGEN Ford informs us of the passing of his father. Ubique Greg (Metcalf, Greg MAJ)"

...Tim's email...

"Subject: COL Bill Ford RAA

Hello Greg,

My 97yo Father, COL W (Bill) Ford, OBE passed away peacefully yesterday evening in Gympie surrounded by family. Dad was the oldest graduate from RMC commissioned as a LT in the RAA in 1939. He served in WWII in several campaign regions and was MID. He commanded the School of Artillery from 1956-60 and retired from the Army in 1963. He was then General Secretary of the NSW Country Party until 1975. He was subsequently appointed an OBE for his service to the nation and granted Life Membership of the National Country Party.

Dad was a Life Governor of the RAAHC and a member of the RAA Assns of NSW and QLD.

Can you please advise the Gunner network. He was asked after by many of the older members attending the RAA National Dinner in Canberra earlier this month.

Ubique,

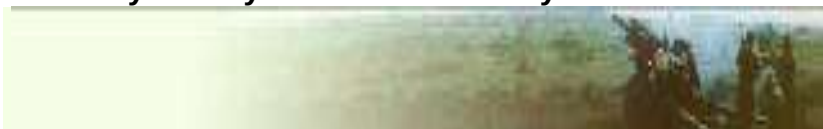
Tim

Major General Tim Ford, AO (Retd) RAA Representative Colonel Commandant and Chairman RAAHC"

The 131 Locators Association passes on our deepest sympathy to Tim and his family.

. 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](#) 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

...notes taken from the LAA website –

Committee meetings are held regularly with most held at Paddington RSL commencing at 1115 hrs.

The next Committee Meeting will be held at the Paddington RSL on **5 June 2011**. Members are cordially invited to attend. Details of scheduled Committee meetings will be available in the next issue of the *Associations* Newsletter LOCREP.

. **The Annual General Meeting on 10 July.**



TPI (Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex Servicemen & Women)

Go to the website below for contact links in your state -
Website link: <http://www.tpifed.org.au/>

. **Joe Kaplun** – has he got a GREAT deal for US! –

Joe is a volunteer "**car negotiator**" for the **TPI Assn** and has access to some pretty good deals (including all the TPI concessions - GST, Fleet discounts, stamp duty, rego etc.)

I can also get good deals for **NON** TPI members.

If any of our members are in the market they should shop around and then contact me to see if I can get them a better deal.

My contact numbers are - 040 774 1473 or 02 9774 1473.

Regards, Joe Kaplun

email: joekaplun@optusnet.com.au SKYPE: joekaplun

Mobile: 040 774 1473 (int'l 61-40 774 1473) Home: 02-9774 1473 (int'l 61-2-9774 1473)

Ed – It really is worthwhile doing some homework and contacting Joe - there are definite savings to be had.



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



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

. **Peter Ravelje** sent in the following link which is worth having a look at...

NEW 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

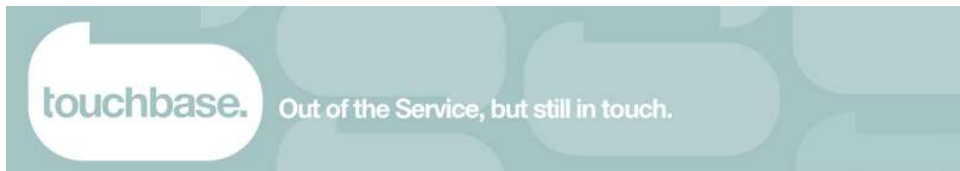
. **Ian Finlay** got this link to us and it too is an interesting exercise to "click" into...

"Thought you may all find this new newsletter "touchbase" interesting, a Government web site for help and support to all ex and existing defence force personnel.

See what you think? I think it will be very useful in keeping us all up-to-date and in touch with latest info from DVA and general info etc.

Regards Fin."

Subject: Welcome to the first edition of touchbase e-newsletter [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]



Welcome to the first edition of *touchbase* e-newsletter

May 2011

This e-newsletter is part of a new service dedicated to supporting men and women who have separated from the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

As a subscriber to the *touchbase* website or its *Find Your Mates* facility you will receive this regular e-newsletter filled with relevant and interesting stories for the ex-service community.

Yoga and the art of rehabilitation

Leaving school at the age of 15 to go straight into the Army, Bryce Tunny didn't envisage he'd one day become a yogi. But this former Lance Corporal has used the ancient practice of yoga to rehabilitate his body after years of physical neglect, including from his days in the ADF. [Read more](#)

A helping hand for you and your family

The transition from military service to civilian life can present many challenges. Sometimes individuals or families require extra help to make the adjustment or to deal with problems that can emerge, even years after separation. In addition to counselling and group programs, the VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service, offers support for those with complex issues. [Read more](#)

New online health assistance with the *Wellbeing Toolbox*

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has recently launched a new health and wellbeing website - the *Wellbeing Toolbox*. The *Wellbeing Toolbox* provides interactive educational material in key areas such as problem solving, building support, helpful thinking, getting active, keeping calm and sleeping better.

It has been developed in conjunction with leading experts at the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health and can be accessed at www.wellbeingtoolbox.net.au or through the *touchbase* website www.touchbase.gov.au.

Find Your Mates with *touchbase*

The *touchbase* website now also provides users with the opportunity to keep in touch or reconnect with other former serving personnel, family and friends using a new online community *Find Your Mates*. You can search other members for those you served with by name, gender, age, location and service – access [Find Your Mates via touchbase](#) now.

What's happening?

For details about upcoming events and other activities of interest to the ex-service community, please visit the [what's happening](#) page on *touchbase*.

Help promote *touchbase* - Do you have a story to share?

If you would like to share your story about life after the ADF like Brad and Bryce, we would love to hear from you.

Please email us at touchbase@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 1/8rd 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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