

THE EYES and EARS

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



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Welcome Home ALL of those who served with Det 131!

This October marked 25 years since the Welcome Home Parade in Sydney and a re-uniting of a lot of blokes who may not have caught up with one another for some time.



INTRODUCTION

At 0500 hours on 3 October 1987, I stood on the deserted lawns of The Domain in Sydney. A feeling of melancholy overcame me as I waited for the first veterans to arrive and begin the most historic march of this decade. I thought of young active men in starched greens, proudly marching off to war, their faces filled with enthusiasm, patriotism and confidence. Professional soldiers. Through this collage of memories came images of bright explosions, yells of bravado, screams of fear, the white face of death — thoughts I had put away and not explored for 17 years.

Through the rising dawn I saw the boilers of the Everymans tea points glimmer, the faces older than I remembered preparing brews for those who would soon assemble from the Dawn Service. Tasks being performed as they had been done in the field, from Kapooka to Nui Dat.

Months of planning, numerous meetings, hundreds of letters and telephone calls would soon bear witness to success or failure. One year earlier, a senior member of the Public Service and RSL, had said, 'You won't get 5000'. Secretly, the organising committee feared that he was right; but faith in the cause of bringing our mates home, especially those who came home in boxes, drove us on.

The veterans came from all over the world. Normie Rowe stood on the highest point possible and estimated that there were about thirty thousand veterans in the Assembly Area.

One of my most poignant memories of the weekend was watching the Fifth Battalion depart the Assembly Area led by Brigadier Khan and thinking, 'I wonder which 10 soldiers from the two Tiger's Tours didn't turn up'.

This publication does not profess to be a reference book for historians and I apologise for inaccuracies due to a lack of historical data. This book is a memento of an important event in our nation's history. Just as the ANZACs formed in The Domain in Sydney on that first ANZAC Day after returning from Gallipoli, so too did our soldiers organise themselves to parade before the people of Sydney. I am convinced that the ANZACs marched through the city's streets, not for themselves, but for their fallen comrades; that is why we marched.

To the families of those who died, take comfort. As you witnessed on that day, there are still thirty thousand of us who love them now, as we did then.

J.D. THURGAR, SC
March Director

Kevin Grime has been a great contributor this month with emails and attachments...

— "Me again

Just looking through the "**Welcome Home Book**" and snipped attached pics (left, above and below) of 131 and 12 Field Reg

131 had just split around the Martin Place Cenotaph and were merging again

All Vets were able to march under their own Unit banner or Name Placard

By 92 many had their own Assoc Banners made Keving"

Kev's cut and pastes come from the book "**Welcome Home**" by J D Thurgar, SC who showed true courage and foresight to organise the march and then produce the book — another extract is at left.
We all salute you.



On 3rd October, 1987, Australia finally welcomed home **ALL** of those who served in Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA with a parade through the streets of Sydney — and it only took 16 years after the last returnees made it!

It could also mark a time of reflection for those other National Servicemen (who obeyed an Act of Parliament) and the other Regular Servicemen who didn't do a tour of duty, but were also treated with scorn for their support of the Vietnam War.

It was a day, for those who attended and those who didn't, to make us all proud to have done what we did – NOT that we ever didn't – as it included those who weren't able to march.

Ed, during the month, had one of his brain explosions (too much time on his hands!) and thought a good addition to the North Head photo would be some narrative to the actual march day, so out this email went –

"Now with October wandering along I got to thinking about that October day in 1987 once more and by the looks of the North Head photo there were a few of you there, so it prompted the thought to ask questions of those who actually marched - such as...

1. What was the actual parade like?
2. Where did you march? Was the Det an entity or was it all in together?
3. Bruce Irvine answered a request for someone to carry Jim Menz's flag, but it ended up being carried by someone else.

Does anyone know who carried it?

4. Does anyone have photos of the parade?

5. Does anyone have a copy of the photo that must have been in the press, the next day, showing all the flags etc? I'm looking for YOUR memories, photos etc - even others taken at North Head - please?

Paul"

...and the Email responses came in and quick out of the blocks too...

Peter Suckling – "For an old fart like me the memory is thinning but as I recall the whole experience was awesome. I stayed at North Head and that brought back good memories. I would like to get hold of a copy of the book that was produced following the march, so if anyone knows of one that may not be required let me know through this means. Peter"

Rieny van Nieuwenhoff – "Hi Paul, to my regret now I didn't participate in the 1987 march. Rieny"

Kevin Grimes – "Dear Dicko,

Good memories of '87, Peter Poulton, Chairman of committee, was a member of my unit, 1 Aust C A Unit, in the Dat, we were both there together and both drivers. We spoke prior to reunion and he asked myself and about 8 - 10 others to assist on phones at Anzac House fielding questions, assistance and requests in the period leading up to reunion. I had a very enjoyable week, with a great crew at Anzac House, giving instructions, directions, arranging pilots for blokes coming in from all over the country, arranging accommodation for many. People from all over Sydney offered beds for those requiring somewhere to doss down, phoned left address and how many beds avail, Advising venues for reunions that we were aware of etc, a big organising job, but with untold assistance from Sir Colin Hines and his staff it all worked fairly well.

I was living here at Valla on the north coast at the time but had a young brother lived in Lakemba in Sydney, so had a bed and base & been in Sydney for couple of weeks prior to the Reunion. I attended the Arty bash at North Head School on the Friday night, catching up with many of the guys I had served with at 131, including that great character BSM 'Chalky' from Holsworthy. After couple hours sleep on floor in the gym, I and couple others left in early hours to get back to the city to meet up with unit mates and an early start, We got some portable brekkie somewhere round St James Station, and for the life of me I know not where or how but a couple of cold beers were offered around where guys were starting to assemble for the march.

Little mate I grew up with in Guyra then served with in unit in Nui Dat, 'Shorty' Barker, by name and I did the rounds of the harbour end of town dredging for our unit guys and pointing them to our assembly point. Still see Shorty regularly, even though he lives in Cane Toad country near Maryborough.

When that march began the feeling in the air was electric, the emotion was very high, as we marched into the cheering, clapping hordes of people lining the route from start to finish, I was not the only one with tears streaming down my face, the city response was incredible. The weeks leading up had seen much publicity on radio and TV with many live interviews, so people were very aware that the reunion was on and what it was about and especially that it had been organised by the Vietnam Veterans themselves.



Many of the Vets were not happy to see Bob Hawke on the dais to take the kudos, considering it was he and his Union members who stopped our mail, grog and supplies with their strikes and anti war protests in 69 70, and it was gratifying to see guys ignoring the eyes right salute, and even eyes lefting, Hope Hawke got the message of contempt from the street, I know the feeling was there.

Picture above is 1 Aust C A Unit at Rose Bay RSL Sat 3rd Oct 1987 including Unit COs.

Peter Poulton had been a serving police officer before and after SVN and knew the then Commissioner and Sydney HQ staff so had many discussions with them re march and reunions, many of our guys who had a few too many sherbets were taxied home or to accommodation in squad cars, boys in blue were everywhere and especially offering helpful assistance to all who wore insignia or medals, there were very few altercations or problems in Sydney that weekend, fewer in fact than was normal, according to later reports.

My family, and my brother's family, all took photos on the morning of the march, I still have a copy somewhere of the days TV coverage and march on VHS, advertising pamphlets, the welcome home booklet, pics of the concert, mates and marchers. Our reunion was held at Rose Bay RSL after the march, as one of our guys was on the board there, combined with two other related units there was nearly 200 in attendance for lunch and festivities, from that luncheon grew our Unit Association stronger and bigger today than ever before, getting together every two years, somewhere in Australia, to renew our friendships over a meal n a brew.

It was the collection at the Concert plus some leftover funds and donations which then sparked the reunion committee to start the

Canberra Memorial drive, (after some of them had seen the Yank Memorial), which was duly opened on time in Oct 1992, 5 years down the track. The Motto in the Memorial Book states it well:

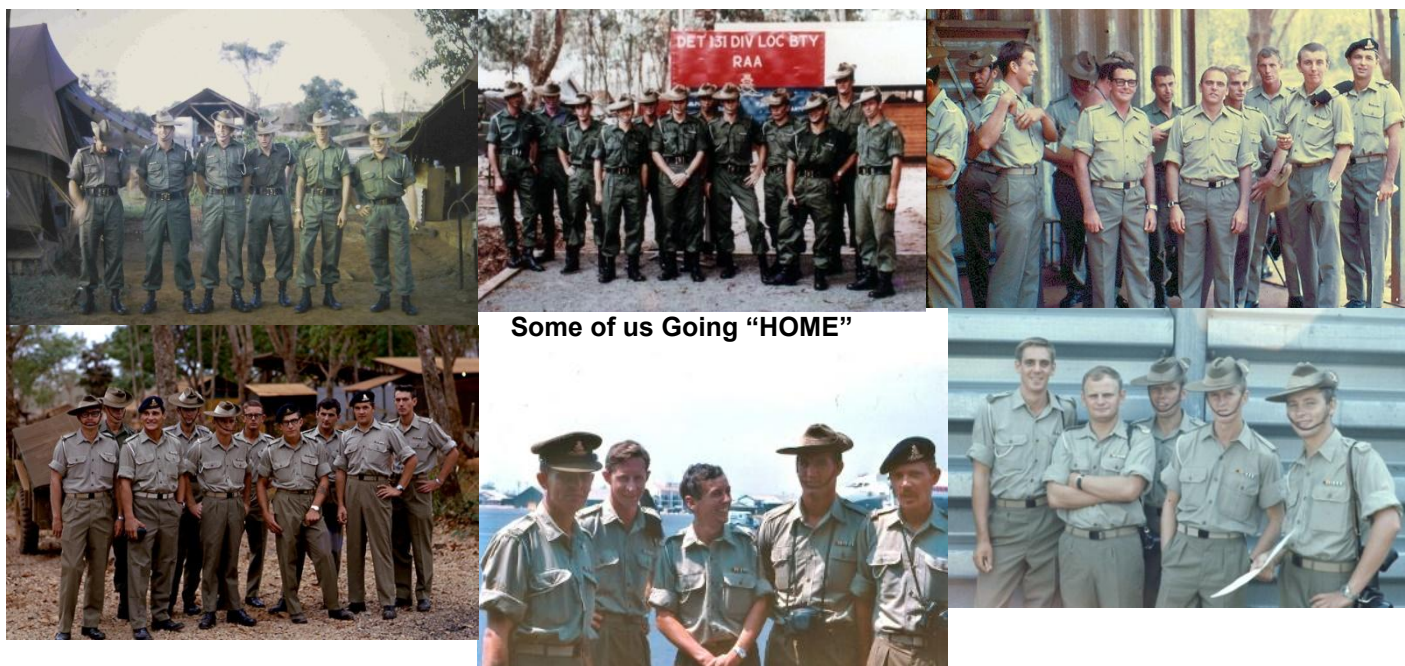
"In 1987 we marched through Sydney in honour of those of us who survived the Vietnam War

In 1992 we marched through Canberra for those of our mates who did not survive"

I felt and feel extremely privileged to have been involved and taken part in both events in '87 and '92 and come the day that I am unable to remember the feeling, emotion and enjoyment of those gatherings then it will be time to go to sleep for the last time.

I do have much memorabilia of the march, will try to dig it out and digitise it but could take a while. It includes copies of the papers of that weekend, pics and various reunions. One of the papers ran a lift out with pics and stories of all those of our mates who did not make it home. I also have the bound book of pics of the reunion and Canberra memorial.

Best to all Locators from keving (Kevin Grime)"



**For a long time after the war large numbers of Vietnam veterans felt that many in Australia blamed them, rather than politicians, for the war and the way it had been conducted.
Even the RSL proved less than welcoming.**

Veterans - 'My Vietnam'

Anecdotal evidence holds that most men returned from Vietnam in the dead of night, hidden from the public. In fact, large numbers actually returned on HMAS Sydney, to a welcome by dignitaries and a parade. The manner of their homecoming affected the way in which veterans recovered from the war, those who did arrive late at night to no fanfare and the seeming indifference of the military had more trouble adjusting to life at home than did those whose return was more public and who had had the benefit of a couple of weeks unwinding on board Sydney before reaching Australia.

But the return home was only the beginning of a long period of readjustment. For a long time after the war large numbers of Vietnam veterans felt that many in Australia blamed them, rather than politicians, for the war and the way it had been conducted. Images of the war, many still familiar, of children burned by napalm, of the dead of My Lai, of a South Vietnamese general summarily executing a member of the Viet Cong in the streets of Saigon, had an effect on public opinion and public understanding. The fact that these images related more to the American/Vietnamese

experience in Vietnam was less remarked upon. People associated the role of Australians in the war with that of the Americans in a way that failed to recognise the two countries' different approaches to fighting in Vietnam. Some veterans recall being abused as baby killers, rapists and murderers on their return. For men who regarded themselves as generally having fought with more humanity and professionalism than their American counterparts, this was a bitter blow. Veterans who had lost friends in combat, who had seen death and who had killed, as is the lot of soldiers in war, were appalled at the way in which their having done the job asked of them by their government was, in some cases, used against them.

Even the RSL proved less than welcoming. Remarks by returned soldiers from earlier conflicts suggesting that Vietnam was not a real war hurt men seeking the comradeship and understanding of fellow veterans. This experience was not universal – rural RSL clubs in particular did welcome men returned from Vietnam – but it happened often enough for some veterans to harbour a life-long resentment of an organisation from which they expected much more. In 1980 some veterans formed the Vietnam Veterans' Action Association which later became the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia (VVAA). Established partly as a crisis counselling service and as a vehicle through which to prosecute a case for veterans claiming to suffer from the effects of herbicides and defoliants used in Vietnam, the VVAA has played an important role in the lives of some veterans. Its membership has been cited at somewhere between 5,000 – 7,000 out of some 60,000 Australians who served in Vietnam.



By 1987 attitudes to the war had changed: Vietnam veterans were given a welcome home parade in Sydney. Some 25,000 veterans marched to the cheers of several hundred thousand onlookers. Five years later, in 1992, a National Memorial for the Vietnam War was unveiled on Canberra's Anzac Parade. These gestures meant a great deal to veterans and they signalled an acceptance of Vietnam veterans that some who returned from that war had not felt before.

In the early 1990s veterans began making pilgrimages to Vietnam. For many it was a time to pay respects to friends who had been killed in the war, for others a chance to meet the former enemy and make their peace, or simply make gestures of friendship with men and women who shared a common experience and for whom there was no ill-will.

Some interesting pieces of information, of which some of you may be aware, but I think like the Royal Thailand Army mentioned in last month's *Eyes and Ears* it noteworthy to see the New Zealand statistics and that of both the Canadians and South Koreans.

Australian veterans

Australia deployed approximately three battalions of infantry, one regiment of Centurion tanks, and three RAAF Squadrons (2SQN Canberra Bombers, 9SQN Iroquois Helicopters and 35 SQN Caribou Transports). Approximately 49,000 Australian military personnel served in Vietnam. According to official statistics, 501 personnel died or went missing in action during the Vietnam war and 2400 were wounded. The Australian veterans were very much rejected by the people and the government after returning and did not receive a welcome home parade until 1987, 15 years after the last soldier and national servicemen left Vietnam. The parade was held on October 3.

The government did not admit that defoliants such as Agent Orange had disastrous health effects on the veterans until 1992, when they finally accepted research that proved there were links between Agent Orange and health problems suffered by the veterans.

New Zealand veterans

Initially, in May 1965, New Zealand provided one 4 gun artillery battery (140 men) with two rifle companies of infantry, designated Victor and Whiskey companies, and an SAS troop arriving later. The New Zealanders operated in Military Region 3 with the Australian forces as part of the ANZAC task force (brigade) based in Nui Dat in Phuoc Thuy Province, South East of Saigon. At the height of New Zealand involvement in 1968, the force was 580 men. New Zealand's total contribution numbered approximately 4,000 personnel. 37 were killed and 187 were wounded.

As of 2010, no memorial has been erected to remember these casualties.

United States veterans

The U.S. Census Bureau (2004) reports there are 8.2 million "Vietnam Era Veterans". Of these 2.59 million are reported to have served "in country".

More than 58,000 US personnel died as a result of the conflict.^[2] This comprises deaths from all categories including deaths while missing, captured, non-hostile deaths, homicides, and suicides. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes veterans that served in the country then known as the Republic of Vietnam from February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975, as being eligible for such programs as the department's Readjustment Counseling Services program (aka Vet Centers). The Vietnam War was the last American war with conscription.

Canadian veterans

During the Vietnam era, more than 30,000 Canadians served in the US armed forces; 110 Canadians died in Vietnam and seven are listed as missing in action. Fred Graffen, military historian with the Canadian War Museum, estimated in *Vietnam Magazine (Perspectives)* that approximately 12,000 of these personnel actually served in Vietnam. Most of

these were natives of Canada who lived in the United States. The military of Canada did not officially participate in the war effort, as it was appointed to the UN truce commissions and thus had to remain officially neutral in the conflict.

South Korean veterans

Throughout the Vietnam War, the Republic of Korea sent slightly over 300,000 servicemen to Vietnam. At the peak of their commitment, the ROK maintained a force of approximately 48,000 men in the country.

The above stories and photos contained therein were extracted from the DVA website –

“Australia and the Vietnam War” courtesy of the



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

. First 24 hours home?....continues -

Ken Osborne keeps the “24 Hour” thought alive with this piece –

“Talking about the first twenty four hours back in Australia , my experience was arriving in Sydney on a Qantas flight around midnight and having to pass through customs before we got to see family and friends waiting for us .

Ahead of me in the line to go through customs was one of the blokes from the battery carrying a big Akai tape recorder . Portable tape recorders were admitted free of duty but the bigger ones were subject to duty and I can still remember to this day the customs officer saying to this gunner at least three times “That’s a portable tape recorder isn’t son “ and the gunner saying in response each time “No it isn’t” . Then the customs bloke saying “ Well in that case you will have to pay duty”. The customs bloke gave him the opportunity to tell a little white lie but he didn’t catch on, silly him !

Things are a bit of a blur after that, wife and kids all excited and thankful for me to be home . The next thing I remember was stirring the next morning in married quarters at Holsworthy and had the impression someone was staring at me. I opened my eyes and standing at the edge of the bed staring at me from a distance of about two inches was a little three year old kid, not mine, who as soon as my eyes opened said “good day mister”. It turned out to be the son of Daryl Bestwick and when I said how did he get in, my wife said “Oh we don’t lock the doors and anyone of the kids from the street just pop in as they please, especially when someone arrives home” (meaning a male. It certainly was a welcome experience starting to start getting back to normal again.

Regards Ken Osborne”

. George Lane sent in the following and struck a chord with how well prepared or unprepared we were when they closed the aircraft doors and waved goodbye! “Dicko I just thought I would give you a idea of what happened 4th May 1966 to the second advance party, the first went on the Sydney in April 66. The day we knew something was on was the fact that Holsworthy Barracks Area was surrounded by Armed MP’s and nobody could leave the area. 10am we were all marched to Hall in the Cutler Club the bar was closed and the briefing commenced to be given by a Staff Colonel on Vietnam and what we could expect (ha! ha!). This went on for about an hour and then questions were called for and one that I remembered vividly was how would we know the Enemy.

The answer later amazed me...

(1) he will be shooting at you.

(2) they will be dressed in black pyjamas.

The briefing was concluded and then the insurance Vultures took over and I think they wrote up over 90% of the troops there.

The bar was then opened and the serious drinking started. We were all transported by P3 to Richmond Air Base where we met up with our families who were there to see us off. My brother brought 2 bottles of Johnny Walker red which was enjoyed by Spike Chase, Mick McDonnell & Jim Fitzgerald as well as yours truly on the flight over. We stopped briefly at the Clark Air Base in the Philippines to refuel we disembarked only to find MP’s everywhere and we were not allowed to leave the vicinity of the plane.

Finally, we arrived in Saigon and we looked out the windows only to see everybody in Black Pyjamas - well the magazines went on our weapons and then cocked we were ready for War. A WO1 came aboard and told us they all wear black pyjamas. When I disembarked I was waiting for the others when about 20 full black body bags went past me, WELCOME TO VIETNAM. George.”

. Jim Dickson – Ed’s brother sent in the following link, which is an interesting read, especially after page 37 where possibly some of their interpretations of Long Tan etc get a little muddled. Anyway I recommend that you have a read to glean the opposition’s understanding of events – I’d be interested in any responses.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/62621973/The-Viet-Cong-D445-Battalion-Their-Story>

. Merv Nairn gets in touch with some good news – “G’day mate, Just bought myself a tablet [not the kind I take morning & night to keep myself on the straight & narrow] so now have the ability to become involved & read & reply to all the stuff I am sent. Will now go back into the website & start reading all the stuff I have missed. Expect to get a lot more contributions from me now. Only one problem [here we go again] I seem to have lost the template for the profile please send it to me yet again & it will come up on my tablet & I can then send it back all filled in post haste. Have been thinking back about the first 24 hrs. & even though I have trouble remembering what I had for breakfast yesterday I think I can give some recollections in that area. Would like to do the profile first as some of that will explain part of that first 24 hrs. Looking forward to hearing from you mate & now I can stay in touch. Merv Nairn”

...and continuing more of Ernie Newbold's discoveries...



"... and that's ANOTHER reason for abolishing the whistle ... J"

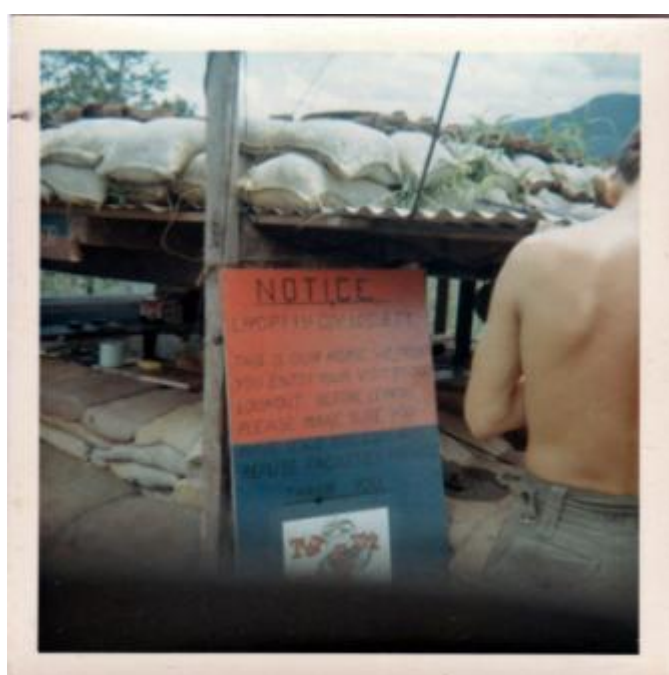
It was not a joke at the time.

NOTE:- Sign says "The State Branch of the Amalgamated Postal Worker's Union complained today the 'punch-a-postie' posters had been put on notice boards in all Australian Army camps in South Vietnam."



THAT POSTER!!!

. **Bill Taggart**, our mate from the 1st / 83rd has sent in two photos (below) from his, no doubt, somewhat large collection of what looks like one of our Det's LPs.



The sign in the photo on the right says –

NOTICE

L P/O P 131 Div Loc Bty
This is our home, we trust
you enjoy your visit to our
lookout. Before leaving
please make sure you
have used the ex....?
refuse facilities provide

THANK YOU

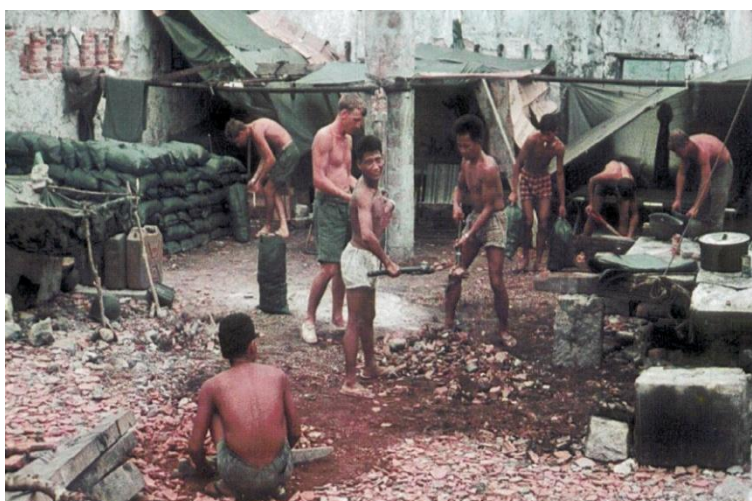
Ed – can anyone enlighten us to as the word “ex...” was? What was so special about the dunny that there had to be a sign? Plus there is some art work below that – any ideas on what that is too?

I’m also assuming it’s 31D near the 1st /83rd ?

. **Peter Saint** wrote in after reading **John Lucas’s** Locator Profile noting the photos depicting the “**Monastery**” down below the Horseshoe –
“Hi Paul, a favour when you have some time, can you get some info on the “Monastery”, while I know most of the names JL Mentioned I have never heard of the Monastery!!! Regards Pete”



Ed – Does anyone have any memories or other relevant information of the place?
I’ve tried Google, but to no avail.



. **Customs** – the continuing series by **Ernie Newbold** from the AWM site

<http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs/recitation.asp> - they’re not totally peculiar to the Australian Armed Forces, but they deeply rooted traditions which can make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up and produce a lump in the throat – here’s the second in the series...

A period of silence

Silence for one or two minutes is included in the ANZAC Day ceremony as a sign of respect and a time for reflection. The idea for the two-minutes silence is said to have originated with Edward George Honey, a Melbourne journalist and First World War veteran who was living in London in 1919. He wrote a letter to the London *Evening News* in which he appealed for five-minutes' silence, to honour the sacrifice of those who had died during the war.

In October 1919 Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, a South African, suggested a period of silence on Armistice Day in all the countries of the empire. Throughout the war, whenever South African troops suffered heavy losses on the Western Front, a period of silence had been observed at noon in Cape Town. Fitzpatrick's suggestion was presented to King George V, who readily agreed to the proposal. But after a trial with the Grenadier Guards at Buckingham Palace, at which both Honey and Fitzpatrick were present, the period of silence was shortened to two minutes. It is unclear whether Honey and Fitzpatrick ever met or discussed ideas about the silence.

On 6 November 1919 the King sent a special message to the people of the Commonwealth:

I believe that my people in every part of the Empire fervently wish to perpetuate the memory of that Great Deliverance, and of those who laid down their lives to achieve it.

The King requested that "a complete suspension of all our normal activities" be observed for two minutes at "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" so that "in perfect stillness the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the Glorious Dead".

Two minutes' silence was first observed in Australia on the first anniversary of the Armistice and continues to be observed on Remembrance Day, 11 November. Over the years, the two-minutes silence has also been incorporated into ANZAC Day and other commemorative ceremonies.

. The National Gunner Dinner Sat 23 Aug 14.

GUNNER DINNER
et plurimus praeclarus spectaculum
Saturday 23rd August, 2014

- SPECIAL 3 HOUR MILITARY CONCERT AT THE CALOUNDRA EVENT CENTRE**
BY THE SUNSHINE COAST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
- \$145 pp**
- THREE COURSE DINNER WITH DRINKS PACKAGE**

SHOW: 1400 - 1700 HRS DINNER: 1830 - 2130 HRS
CONCLUSION 2359 HRS

The Australian Artillery Association is proud to host this wonderful and special evening bringing together all Gunners of all eras to share In this momentous occasion.

This is a Once-in-a-Lifetime opportunity to all Gunners to gather in one location and enjoy a First Class event.
DON'T MISS OUT !!

BOOKINGS & INFORMATION:
http://www.australianartilleryassociation.com/2014_national_gunner_dinner.htm
GRAHAM - 0411 141 580 KIM - 0417 422 427

The full details at this stage are at:

http://www.australianartilleryassociation.com/2014_national_gunner_dinner.htm

Those already registered as attending are at:

http://www.australianartilleryassociation.com/2014_national_gunner_registered_attendees.htm

This will be one of those "Once in a Lifetime" events and I personally can't wait to rub shoulders with lots of Mates from the other Batteries.

Ubique,

Kim McGrath

. Peter Ravelje sent in the following good bit of news -

VETERANS ON THE PATH TO FAIRER INDEXATION 12 October 2012

AUSTRALIA'S war veterans have won an important battle in their fight for a better military superannuation deal. Independent Lyne MP Rob Oakeshott, on his second attempt to have military superannuation pensions properly indexed against cost of living expenses, finally received the unanimous support of Labor, Liberal and National Party MPs yesterday.

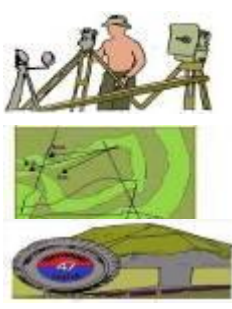
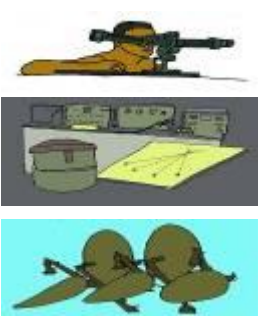
"The Parliament has finally sent a strong message to the federal government that the time has come to bring military superannuation pensions in line with other pension payments," Mr Oakeshott said.

"Only the government of the day can introduce a Bill making my Notice of Motion law because it is a money Bill, but the clear message from 150 Members of Parliament yesterday was that the government must act."

Mr Oakeshott's notice called on the government to consider increasing the Military Superannuation and Benefits Scheme Pension, Defence Force Retirement Benefit Pension and the Defence Force Retirement and Death benefits Pension twice a year. The benchmark would be the greatest of the Consumer Price Index, the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index and the Male Total Average Weekly Earnings.

The Labor Party and Coalition had both promised fairer indexation in opposition, but neither have delivered in government.

"I welcome the Parliament's support and will continue to push for a fairer deal for veterans to be enshrined in legislation," Mr Oakeshott said.



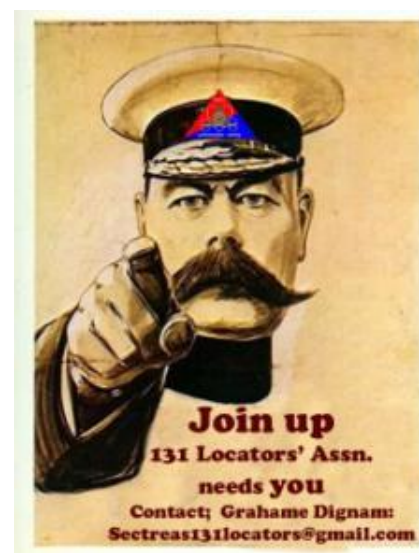
Committee members: **President** – Allen Morley, **Treasurer/Secretary** – Grahame Dignam, **Public Officer** – Victor Danko, **Webmaster** – Bob Billiards, **Research Officer** – Ernie Newbold, **General members** – Ian Amos, Ged Carroll George Lane. **Eyes & Ears Editor** – Paul Dickson

Regional Representatives: **ACT** – Bert Blink, **Qld** – Terry Erbs, **SA** - Geoff Blackwell, **Vic (Melb)** – Alan Adams, **WA** - Barry Guzder

<http://www.131locators.org.au>

Welcome – The Association has great pleasure in welcoming **George Clark** to the Association fold.

As you can see Grahame Dignam "Membership Drive" (poster at right) he is getting into serious campaign mode!



. Upcoming Events Calender –

. **20th November** - The Annual General Meeting of Members of 131 Locators Association Inc will be held, on Tuesday, 20th November 2012 commencing at 11.00 AM at Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, NSW. 26 Humphries Rd Wakeley NSW 2176

. **19th December** – **The Next 131 Locators Association** general meeting is at 11.00am on **19th December 2012** at **The Entrance Long Jetty RSL Sub Branch** in Long Jetty, New South Wales –
313 The Entrance Rd Long Jetty NSW 2261

Contact Grahame Dignam and let him know you're coming at: Sectreas131locators@gmail.com

The website also covers all these details in News / Events.

. web Performance...it's still getting lots of hits!

If you've got more photos that you want added, just send them to: - Paul Dickson – web Photos three-zero@hotmail.com – **BUT DON'T FORGET TO ADD TITLES/NAMES ETC.**

Now if you're having trouble logging on etc then contact Bob Billiards - billiard@pnc.com.au You can always use the "Contact" page to get in touch and send a message.

. Birthdays in the Battery...November –



Here's what a very social **Warwick "Blueleader" Hamilton** looked when he was only 28 back in 1967! I think he still sports the same haircut?

Leslie Bates is the "November Kid" at only 62 this year and would have been just **"Only 19"** when he lobbed into Nui Dat – have a great 62nd Les where ever you are – it's a shame we don't know!

November	Name	Regt No	YOB	In SVN	Out SVN	Misc
1	DENIS SMITH	2789286	1946	15 04 1969	17 12 1969	
1	VAUGHN MILLAR	3411742	1948	27 11 1967	26 11 1968	
1	WAYNE JEFFREY	2794772	1946	04 11 1970	29 07 1971	
2	TREVOR WAGHORN	52837	1936	05 05 1967	06 02 1968	
2	KEN HALLIGAN	2788319	1946	16 09 1968	27 08 1969	
4	JOHN HENSHAW	3793057	1945	20 01 1969	28 11 1969	
4	HAROLD LITTLE	2789038	1945	21 02 1969	28 11 1969	
5	DAVID DACRE	5716803	1948	20 08 1970	20 08 1970	131
	" "			20 08 1970	05 05 1971	4 Fd REGT
10	BARRY UREN	214715	1940	28 10 1966	02 05 1967	
12	THOMAS LEMPRIERE	3412000	1949	02 12 1968	21 01 1969	
13	MICHAEL CAMPBELL	6708462	1946	05 05 1967	13 12 1967	† 1984
16	KEN LONG	2783232	1945	04 05 1967	28 10 1967	
16	ALLEN MORLEY	3788972	1945	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
17	WARWICK HAMILTON Capt.	235190	1939	17 04 1967	12 02 1968	
17	TERENCE (LOFTY) HAYES	214973	1939	{04 05 1966	29 04 1967	† 14.12.2011
	" " "			{10 12 1968	10 12 1969	
17	JORG KIENE	3797963	1947	09 11 1970	05 08 1971	
17	BARRY WILLIAMS	3796729	1947	16 12 1970	08 02 1971	
18	DESMOND BURY	1411072	1946	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
19	JOHN PERRY WO2	36026	1932	22 04 1966	07 09 1966	
20	MICHAEL FLETCHER	352778	1945	29 04 1969	16 04 1970	
20	LESLIE BATES	218053	1950	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	
22	MURRAY POUSTIE	3787941	1945	04 05 1967	14 08 1967	
22	BRIAN RUDDOCK (M.I.D)	216134	1935	{29 01 1968	21 01 1969	
	" " Sgt.			{03 02 1970	04 02 1971	4 Fd REGT
24	DONALD SIMMONS Sgt.	212769	1937	22 04 1966	21 12 1966	
25	STANLEY TODKILL	1201908	1946	04 11 1969	17 06 1970	
25	BRIAN PARKER	3793586	1946	20 01 1970	27 05 1970	AACC
	" "			28 05 1970	14 01 1971	1st Amoured Regt
26	MICHAEL O'KEEFE	2787168	1946	08 01 1968	14 01 1969	AACC † 1980
26	FRED WALTER Sgt.	342848	1943	11 05 1967	23 04 1968	RAEME
26	JEFFERY SCHAFER	2788886	1946	12 02 1969	17 12 1969	
28	JOHN BAYFORD	3791019	1946	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
30	RON SAUNDERS	38516	1947	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
30	GARY STRATTON	2788161	1946	08 11 1968	27 08 1969	

Ed – 20 blokes not highlighted – where the hell are they?

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 97 and we've sent out 97. Ed – I need at least 3 more by yesterday!

Ed sent **George Clark** a blank Profile to complete, which he duly did, and on reading it I sent the following email to George as it had some gaps and some points that got me curious. I also noted the George served **628** days in SVN. This makes him the third longest serving Locator after **726** days for Brian Ruddock and Terence "Lofty" Hayes and John Brewer with **719** days.

Anyway I couldn't help myself and what he replied with is fascinating –

Here's my 3rd degree - "George, I'm now back and am managing to get things sorted - well time will tell!

Your photos and Profile are not only good but very interesting, in fact I'm putting some questions below as your time in the army is of real interest, because being a Regular soldier it was a career thing as opposed to us 2 year blokes and you did do two tours and they were a mixture, plus the change of corps on your return.

So here come the questions...

1. Prior to your going to SVN what Corps were you in for the two years? As records show you were in 1st Aust Reinforcements Unit when you got there.
2. How long were you in the Reo group for in SVN?
3. What were your reactions in going to Det 131? I remember you (you were a quiet shy sort of a bloke) as I was in Arty Tac in 1967 (May to Dec), so we share that time period, but the other interesting time is on your return - you must have noticed a change in Nui Dat, plus the Det's activities?
3. Were you with 131 (back in Aus) between Sep '67 to Jan '69?
4. How and when (what tour) did you get to serve time with the Cavalry?
5. You were promoted to Temp Bombardier with 131 - when and where?
6. How and when did you end up in the Cavalry after SVN?

That's enough of my 3rd degree for the moment - I think your story will of real interest to a whole lot of the blokes because of your two tours etc.

I look forward to hearing back - I've attached a copy of my Profile to scare the hell out of you! Paul"

...and here's George's absolutely enlightening reply...

"Good day Paul, I hope that you had a good break. I shall try to answer all your questions, but if you still have any more questions to ask please do so.

I joined the army on the 6/1/1965 in Sydney where I was on holidays with my family. At this time there was no National Service and having only migrated from South Africa in 1962, I had not surprisingly even heard of the Republic of South Vietnam.

My dad, who is still with us had been a pilot on bombers during WW2 with the South African Air Force, in North Africa. He had been flying with South African Airways at the time of our migration to Australia, where he had been offered a commission with the R.A.A.F.

Anyway to get back to the narrative, I attended basic training at Kapooka where I was allocated to Arty, and subsequently went off to North Head. I had applied for the Armoured Corp but from memory, out of 68 graduates only 5 went to Armour. You can't help but bad luck I guess. After North Head I was posted to 1st Field Regt. at Holsworthy as a gun number to 103 Bty, where I remained until Sept 1965, when I was posted to 131 Div Loc Bty where I stayed for the remainder of my time in Artillery, with the exception of March to June, 1970 when I was an R.D.I. with C Coy 2 R.T.B. at Pucka.

I attended several courses at North Head and also at Randwick over the intervening period and in 1966 attended a course at Canungra and later in the year went with the Bty to Shoalwater Bay for what was I believe a task force exercise. I had arrived home at R.A.A.F. Laverton where my father was based. On annual leave the last Sat. before Xmas 1966, in the early hours of the morning I was awoken by my dad to tell me that I had a telegram that I had to sign for, which advised me that I had to report to Watson's Bay by 0700 the following Monday and that my leave had been cancelled. I was on my way! S.N.A.F.U.

I departed Mascot about mid day from memory on the 3/1/67 aboard an American aircraft (B 707). I am not absolutely sure of this but I think it was a Continental Airlines Aircraft. I do recall that I was the only digger on board and that I was very well looked after. The usual story, change into civvies at Singapore and then onto Manila. I was picked up by the USAF at the airport and driven to Clark Air Base where I was given transit officers quarters and did as I pleased until the morning of the 9th when I was flown to Saigon and then onto Nui Dat, where I arrived at about 1130 hours local time. My flight from the Philippines was interesting, I flew on a USAF C130, which was loaded with aluminium refrigerated coffins, and when I say loaded I mean it. I was forced to sit on them for the 3 hours that it took. No kidding that gave me food for thought.

Upon arrival at Luscombe field I was ordered into a vehicle and taken to my new home of 1 ARU where I stayed until rescued 6 weeks later. From what I was able to deduce this was an Australian unit almost completely run by Kiwis. And I still have no time for them. Anyway I was trotted off to the Q store where I was issued with bedding and webbing etc, etc. and without anything to eat since the night before I was on a 2 day patrol that afternoon and all I can say thank god I wasn't in the Infantry!

Well that went on for about 6 weeks when I ran into Lt. Wight, who asked me how long I had been in country and what was I doing because they were holding a posting for me. I explained and was returned to the Bty lines within the hour I guess.

Well I do not know exactly why but my tour had been shortened, and I returned to the world on the 27/9/67 with a reasonably large group from the Bty and I believe most of them were about to finish their 2 year stint and were about to be discharged. Good luck to all of them - they were a fine group of men and all did a great job .

I was sent on several courses during 1968 and a few exercises and sadly had to deal with the shock of losing one of the best mates I had, when Paul Jones lost his life in a car crash. What a waste of life.

I returned to SVN on the 21/1/69 and spent most of my time out at the Horseshoe where I was promoted to temp Bombardier (very temp). I enjoyed it out there but after I was busted back to Gnr I ended up doing some work with 9 RAR before going over to 2 Troop in the Cav where I stayed until October when I was sent to Vung Tau to attend a course which took about 3 or 4 weeks to complete.

I completed my tour with the Bty by being sent to various FSBs and LP's and returned to Australia on 21/1/1970, where upon I took about 3 weeks leave and reported to 2RTB at Pucka where I was doing the worst job I had had in the army. I applied several times to go back to the Bty but was told that they didn't want me or that there was no posting available and in frustration I transferred to the RAAC and was doing a crew commanders course when I decided to not re-engage. Because I had quite a bit of leave accrued I went on leave in Sept 1970 and never returned. After the army I did several different jobs and finally settled into truck driving which I retired from 3 years ago. I worked for Ansett for many years until Peter Abeles who ran TNT and had bought out Ansett closed the doors in 1994. During my time with the company I was posted to Goondiwindi in Qld where I met and married my wife. We had 2 girls and then a boy and all are gainfully contributing to the country. My eldest daughter is a veterinarian, and she lives in Adelaide, and her sister is a solicitor who works in the ACT. My son also lives in Adelaide where he works as a builder.

Whilst living in Gundy, I, like Paul Butcher, learnt to fly and gained my license in 1977. At different times over the next 20 years I owned a Cessna 172, 182 RG and finally a 210. Regrettably I lost most things as a result of the break up. After my break up I moved to Brisbane and have lived here since 1994.

I hope that helps you understand a little about me Paul and as I said before if you still have questions, please feel free to ask!

I am pleased that you enjoyed the piece I wrote and I was hoping that I hadn't bored you to tears.

It feels almost as if I am at last coming home. Strange eh!

All the best to all of you, George Clark."

Ed – now if that doesn't inspire a few more of you to put finger to a computer key pad nothing will – that is just so interesting... "coming home" – George welcome to our home – consider it yours too.

. Found...

Stan Patterson's email address was supplied by **Rieny Niewenhoff** as part of his "Locate a Victorian Locator", so we contacted him and here's Stan's response – "Paul, great read, many thanks. Put me on the mailing list for future reads! Much appreciated, Stan (Patto) Patterson"

John Lucas actually found us as you'll see, plus his Profile got a response and is published earlier in this edition – "Hi Paul, I found you guys by typing in 131 Div Loc Bty. I was planning a helicopter tour of Nui Dat, the Horseshoe and Long Hai's - (incl the old monastery I was stationed at for a while. It was on a single peak overlooking the main mountain range) when I decided to type in the above address.

My first trip back is in 3 weeks so I am pretty excited although speaking with Grahame Smith, I appreciate there is not much left to see!!

Please put me on the mailing list, plus you have my email address now. Cheers, John"

Mike Fowler also found us from the web site.

Have a look at the Association's web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au> – you might find some lost mates or get in touch with us and see if we can for you.

. Vale

As some of you may have noticed on the web that the **Honour Roll** may not be complete as to not only the total number of names of our comrades, but also, sadly it is missing, in some cases, dates and even years when our mates passed. Fortunately we have **Dave Crowther** who answered a plea for help and supplied us the details for Allan Campbell and Ronald "Chalky" Royal. Thanks Dave.

May they rest in peace



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.

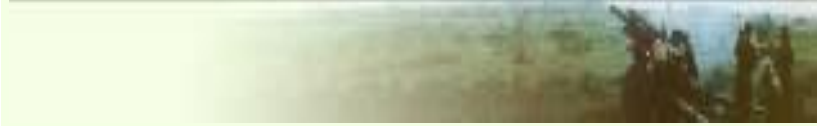
So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the Eyes & Ears regularly you could bite the bullet and email **Grahame Dignam**: Sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join.

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

Web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au/131locators/>

. 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>

. Locating , Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield

...notes taken from the LS & TAA website – There will be an **Annual Sydney Reunion** and a Committee Meetings scheduled for **18 November 2012**. Further details including venue and timings will be advised in the next issue of the *Associations* Newsletter LOCREP <http://www.locatingartillery.org/index.htm>



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/

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