

# THE EYES and EARS

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



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## . “The Monastery” ...Peter Saint wrote in after reading John Lucas's Locator Profile noting the photos

depicting “The Monastery” down south west of 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”...then ...

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

**This** reply (below) is the start of the following “Sun” newspaper article (12.06.1970) sent in by **Chris Chapple** and instigated by **Richard Chaplin**. Both Richard and Chris were in SVN in 1970 and Richard was one of those practical / sensible Locators who not only took photos, BUT kept a diary and one day we're hoping to share a lot more of his recounts of his time in SVN.

“Paul, Found this (below), it is a press article on the monastery written just before 131 moved in. The radars had been removed from service at the Dat and Horseshoe so we were posted to Dinh Co to help with forward observations using an American infra red searchlight.

One thing I recall was the sound of rounds from the Horseshoe's 8inch gun going over the top followed , in order, by the sound of impact and then the gun going off. All back to front !

I think Richard Chaplin has the article too, the date written on page 1 looks like his handwriting. Chris”

Keith Willey, "Sun"  
writer on-the-spot for the  
LAST, LONG, HARD  
LOOK at VIETNAM, re-  
ports the scene today.

***EVEN THE ELEPHANTS HAVE  
LEFT THE RUINED, MURDEROUS  
HILLS OF DYING LONG HAI***

**WE** lay on the topmost  
pinnacle of a Budd-  
hist monastery, with the  
province of Phuoc Tuy  
spread like a map below.

The plain stretched north and east, rice paddies alternating with small hills and, far in the distance the deep green of the jungle.

To the west a maze of mangrove creeks and swamp — the Saigon River Delta where Vietcong in armed sampan. fight shadowy battles with Government gunboats.

To the south, only 1,000 metres away, were the Long Hai hills where scores of Australian soldiers have been blown up by mines.

The Long Hai look unimpressive — 11 square miles of jumbled ridges and ravines with, hidden in their depths, little pools of clear water.

Once the Long Hais may have been green. Now they are arid and stony, pockmarked by shell and bomb craters. The elephants and other animals have long since moved away.

Yet the guerillas survive. With bamboo sticks for implements they have burrowed into caves and bunkers.

After midnight we slept, with guards posted at key points around the monastery.

The morning was cool and clear and beautiful.

I drank a dixie of coffee with the American searchlight crew. They lived in the ruins of the main shrine.

Somboddy had placed fresh flowers at the altar.

"Villagers still come here to worship," Lieutenant Warren Feakes, 21, of St. Ives, said.

"One day when the war is over I guess they'll rebuild the place."

Every soldier in South Vietnam fears mines. But there was little likelihood of striking them on the road back to Nui Dat.

The guerillas could not exist without support from the villages.

They very seldom mine "civil access" roads where they might kill their own mother, father, or grandfather.

# WAITING FOR THE END OF WAR

The Vietcong tax villagers and farmers, who already pay money to the Government, the landlord, and sometimes the police.

But the Communists, who cannot afford to "kill the golden goose" adjust their "tax" to what an individual can pay.

Approaches to their strongholds are seeded with mines and booby traps.

A captured soldier of the elite D445 Vietcong infantry battalion said that during 1967 his unit helped to plant 800 mines in the Long Hais.

More than 100 are still unexploded. Most are M16s, "jumping

jacks," lifted from an Australian field.

Whether the infantryman steps on one or not is pure luck.

The M16 is almost impossible to detect by eyesight. It is buried in the path with tiny prongs poking just above — or under — the earth.

The monastery where we spent a night is set on a solitary pinnacle facing the Long Hais.

The place must once have been very beautiful.

You climb 245 steps straight up the hillside.

The summit is covered with shrines and temple buildings, all shattered and unroofed by shell blasts. Bullet holes mark every square foot of the crumbling brick walls.

The monastery is a military post guarded by South Vietnamese regional soldiers. Americans are stationed there with a searchlight.

And Australians use the place occasionally as a forward observation post for artillery.

I drove there with Lieutenant Feakes, of No. 107 Battery, Fourth Regiment. He is attached to B Company, Second Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, as a forward observer for artillery.

We travelled in a convoy of two jeeps, with a Bombardier, Paul Holland, 21, of Alamein Crescent, Liverpool, three gunner signallers and four other soldiers.

The men wore flak jackets and the vehicles bristled with guns, for most Long Hai guerillas come from villages on the plain round about.

Communist and anti-foreign influence has touched many families.

At the base of the pinnacle is a graceful, many-turreted building — deserted now.

I would have liked to explore but Lieutenant Feakes said: "No."

This was just such a place where

the Vietcong might set mines to trap the curious or unwary.

The South Vietnamese guarding the summit had modern M16 rifles plus a 60mm mortar and a .50 calibre machine gun.

They were small, slight, cheerful men, built for the country and the heat.

One of them had shot a deer earlier and they spent most of the night toasting bits of meat on fires, and feasting.

They shook hands with the Australians. The sergeant commanding the post knew a few words of "Vietnamese English."

"Vung Tau," he would say, (the military holiday resort). "beaucoup boomboom." (lots of lively women).

Then he would slap his backside and roar with laughter.

The people of Vietnam are full of fun. But they have a cruel streak.

Like the pretty girl in Baria who had caught a cicada and pulled off first the wings, then the legs, one by one.

As the creature squirmed helplessly, she laughed.

"I love to do this," she said.

It would be hard to imagine a

• Death in the shattered wilderness of Long Hai ... Lieut. Peter Frazer sits alone minutes after an M16 mine had killed his best friend in February.

more dangerously exposed position than the monastery.

Sometimes the Vietcong attack it with mortars and sniper fire.

Lately they have been less active because one shot can bring the massed firepower of Nui Dat crashing about them.

The Australians wired the stairway with Claymore mines. Every man had grenades.

Just below the pinnacle, no more than 100 metres away, was a tiny hill where a few days earlier a helicopter pilot had seen people running into a bunker.

The Vietnamese sergeant had pinpointed the place. He sat behind the machine-gun and fired burst after burst into a black patch which could have been the opening of a cave.

The twilight cast a purple haze over the Long Hais. We watched the hills and, undoubtedly, somebody up there was watching us.

Swifts and swallows looped and turned through the broken buildings of the monastery.

Lizards called ... "tac-tac-tac, tac-tac-tac," followed by what sounded like a four-letter word.

Night fell. And the war resumed.

Lieutenant Feakes and his men looked for signs of movement and for the bobbing lights of lanterns and torches which might reveal a Vietcong party trotting down on to the plain to gather supplies.

The curfew began at 6 p.m. and after that anything that moved was a potential enemy.

The bush between the monastery and the Long Hais was criss-crossed with narrow paths rutted by ox and buffalo carts.

The people use this country to cut timber which they burn and sell to Saigon as charcoal.

During the night shells went hissing overhead to crash into the Long Hais.

The artillery aims its fire at creek crossings and other places where the enemy might be.

To the west helicopter gunships

**CONTINUED PAGE 17**

## GIRL LIVES IN TERROR

From Page 13

zoomed over the Delta, spitting red lines of tracer at Vietcong sampans.

From the north, toward Hoa Long, we heard the crash of grenades and small arms from a successful ambush.

On a mangrove waterway perhaps five miles from the monastery, a light moved, obviously this was a motorised craft cruising among the mangroves.

"We call that the phantom fisherman," Lieutenant Feakes said.

"He turns up most nights, and he's got no business to be there. He reported the light to headquarters and recommended lobbing a shell at it.

Vietcong sampans use the delta but so do villagers out after fish, crabs and prawns.

Headquarters decided not to fire.

Vietcong are instructed to be kind to children and old folks and not to rape women.

Often they will help peasants plant or harvest crops.

This policy is mixed with terror. Sometimes a body is found in a field or under a tree with a paper giving the reason for the execution.

A girl of 18 in Baria who is friendly with Australians has been warned not to visit her parents at the town of Long Hai, under the hills.

She has not seen them for years and if she tried to make contact the Communists would kill her.

She runs a laundry and store and so long as she pays her tax to the Vietcong she is safe in Baria.

"When the Australians leave Vietnam I'll go to live in Thailand," she said.

There is a lot of co-existence in this war now — at least in Phuoc Tuy. I have the impression the people are just waiting for the end.

What the end will be, and what will happen after that, nobody can say.

**THE END**

•Death in the shattered wilderness of Long Hai (below) ... Lieut. Peter Frazer sits alone minutes after an M 16 mine had killed his best friend.



Anyway, on with the stories and photos of the fascinating time spent at “The Monastery”...

...Richard Chaplin got in touch with... “Hi Paul,

Just a note regarding the question of “The Monastery” posed by Peter Saint in this month’s Eyes and Ears.

I was part of the crew positioned there as a combined Listening Post, Forward Observation Post and Protection Party with a small American forces infrared searchlight team. We were located in a bombed out Buddhist monastery on the top of a hill called Dihn Co at the base of the Long Hai Mountains. 10 local ARVN were also positioned there. We stayed there from 25 May through 7 June 1970, then pulled out and returned to Nui Dat. The team was made up of Radar Operators, who were assigned other duties following the two Radar Units being decommissioned and returned to Australia a few days before, plus a good number other men from various sections of 131.

We had two M60 gun positions each on opposite sides of the monastery with one unit facing the Long Hai mountains.

Here are some memories of the time we spent at Dihn Co extracted from my diary I kept while in Vietnam:

- The trek up the hill carrying our gear for the duration of the stay was exhausting, and had to be done numerous times. 245 steps each way!
- Dave Negus got bitten several times by a scorpion one night however did not need evacuation, although he was in considerable pain. There were several scorpions located at different times however following the Negus incident, we became more cautious.
- The US Infrared searchlight and vehicle was taken out by a Chinook helicopter at the end of our stay.
- Norbert Kroll let off a paraflare directly into the ground which caused some consternation (and gave him a shock too!!)
- Occasionally a few of us had meals with the ARVN soldiers – mainly rice, cabbage and pork – sounds worse than it actually was.
- Initial sightings of VC with torches coming up the hill towards us turned out to be fireflies!!
- We nicknamed Dihn Co “Castle Keep”.
- Occasional trips back to Nui Dat were made including one for a farewell BBQ for the 13<sup>th</sup> Intake. It was a good BBQ with plenty of beer and food. A few Red Cross nurses from Vung Tau also attended, and entertainment was provided by 131’s own in-house Peter Pie Productions band. However when Chris Chapple attempted to take some of the steaks back to those left at Dihn Co that day, a scuffle occurred between Chris and Pete Ravelje – Pete relented in the end!
- There were a number of war stricken small monastery buildings at the base of Dihn Co and although “out of bounds” for obvious reasons we occasionally ventured down to look around.
- On June 1 there was an infantry contact 1000ms from us resulting in one killed and one injured; we were requested to keep a lookout for any VC nearby (but nothing eventuated).
- The hill was exposed and we had to make our position more secure; we obtained a large number of sand bags and filled them with the remains of the broken tiles that would have once been the monastery roof. The ARVN soldiers helped out.
- Some of the names I can recall of 131 soldiers deployed to Dihn Co were myself, Chris Chapple, Dave Reilly, Dave Negus, Jeff Bassford, John Lucas, Peter Bennett, Laurie Mion, Warren “Pop” Jaenke, Ollie Asmanis, Burt Jacka, Norbert Kroll and Les Connell (deceased 4 April 2011). I think Max McPherson and Stewart Telford were also there.
- In the “Flower Power” photograph John included with his Profile, Les Connell (deceased) is the unidentified person on the far right. In the “Drinks at the Menz Club” photo, those sitting at the table, from right to left, are Dave Negus, Les Connell, Dave Reilly, Craig Stott. I can’t recall the 5<sup>th</sup> person.
- The identity of most of the soldiers in the “Having fun at the club” photograph, in John’s Profile, can be found on page 16 of Keith Ayliffe’s history of 131 in Vietnam –

<http://www.locatingartillery.org/ANKPQ-1/ANKPQ-1%20Vietnam%20Final.pdf>

· Below are some additional photographs of our time at Dihn Co.

· For anyone that may be interested in the final months of the Radar units operation in Nui Dat and The Horseshoe before being shipped back to Australia, and how the Radar operators then occupied their time in the several months following – refer to pages 32 – 36 of the same document –

<http://www.locatingartillery.org/ANKPQ-1/ANKPQ-1%20Vietnam%20Final.pdf>

Best wishes, Richard Chaplin”



...the following are photos sent in by Richard



**Chris Chapple** added to all of this by sending in this – “Dicko, Peter Saint query - Dinh Co - “the Monastery”  
Yes I was there, interesting times.

I have attached a map (re-hashed by **Grahame Dignam**); it is about 5-6k's south west of the Horseshoe. Richard Chaplin asked me to send you this email between ourselves as well. Chris”



...**Chris** then goes on in a reply to an email from **Richard** to comment on some photos and to tell of a rather harrowing day at “The Monastery”...

“Great shots, ones I wished I had taken like the dunny with a view. I had a couple of incidents there.

One day we had incoming rounds, from an automatic weapon. We had heard gunfire and a group including Grant Perrins went out in front of a south east facing wall to have a look. Rounds hit the wall which sent them all scurrying for cover. I was on the other side near the 50 Cal and heard the racket. I also saw a radio in the middle of an open area in the monastery that had been abandoned and I could hear a grunt urgently calling for information on what we could see from above. I did the hands and knees crawl to the radio and spoke to him saying I could not see anything and explained the incoming rounds hence the break in communications.

I was also there when the infrared searchlight arrived. It was positioned to face south but there was a bunch of bamboos in the way growing up the side of the steep hill. Sergeant Black and I went over the side with our machetes and started hacking away at the growth when I heard this SVN soldier calling out "number 10" repeatedly. That was all he could say then he described a trip wire with his hands and an explosion. A quick closer look at what we were doing showed fishing line in the bamboos connected up to grenades. It was all booby trapped for defensive purposes. Now sort of frozen I asked the SVN guy, using sign language again, if I could return the way we came in. He said no leaving us to stand fast as we were. The area was evacuated and I remember being told a chopper lift was not an option as the downdraft sets things off. So all alone for a short time when I decided I could go back the way I came in and did so.... a step at a time.

Oh and Dave Negus was sleeping alongside me when the scorpion got him, can picture it as clear as day (it was night). He had let out a horrific yell which sent me scurrying for the claymores which I had been delegated to man. Dave was sure he was going to die until we convinced him after looking at his stomach it was only a small sting from a very small scorpion. There were plenty around, the main concern being where their mothers were.

And, I have two rounds from the 50 cal, not fired but with powder removed. If you come to Perth I will give you one. Chris"

**...John Lucas...a continuing story...** – "Hi Paul, as it turns out, I have just returned from a 15 day Vietnam trip! My first time back.

Part of the trip was to visit Vung Tau and included Nui Dat, the monastery, the Long Hai's, Baria and Dat Do etc. The monastery is on the top of a hill overlooking the main ridge of the Long Hai's and is called Dinh Co. It was weird revisiting however when we were there it was a shell of a building and has since been rebuilt into a working monastery. I have pics that I will send.

I did the tour with Glen Nolan who runs "Tommy's" in Vung Tau. He hired a van and took us to all the sites incl. the Long Tan Cross and what you are able to see of the horseshoe, which is a mining site off limits to the public. Of all the sites, the rubber plantations were the spookiest, even the long Hai's (took a road to a peak) seemed like a nice picnic spot now!!!! We also visited the Long Phoc tunnels which were halfway between Nui Dat and Dat Do. I would highly recommend Glenn's tours as he has amazing knowledge of our involvement and is a good guy.

We went into Dinh Co by road and were there with a small American Team who had an infrared searchlight. You had to look through binoculars and it looked almost like a normal searchlight. They also had a 50 cal and plenty of booby traps around the top of the hill. There was also a platoon size group of South Vietnamese soldiers there. I am not entirely sure why we were there in all honesty. Some of the Aussies at the monastery also included Norm Kroll, who can be seen in the background of one of the pics.

As the base of the hill had been heavily mined by the enemy (we often watched them through the infrared bino's) we were airlifted out after around 2 weeks.

I was a radar operator dividing shifts between Nui Dat and the horseshoe. We read in the Melbourne Herald that the radars and operators had been sent home, which was news to us as only the radars were sent home. We were then sent to train on the sensor equipment with the Americans at Bien Hoa.

The sensor equipment was designed to be dropped from a helicopter however this was unsatisfactory as the equipment was easily spotted. As a result a few of us went out with infantry platoons to dig it in alongside known trails of activity. The equipment included a unit each for seismic, acoustic, magnetic etc detection. The equipment was then monitored from a bunker on SAS Hill with grid references.

Cheers, John"

**Ed** – another amazing sequence of memories and I can't thank the guys enough for contributing and giving us a wider aspect SVN.

**. Keep Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 Clear –**

**The Next 131 Locators Association general meeting is at 11.00am on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

**At**

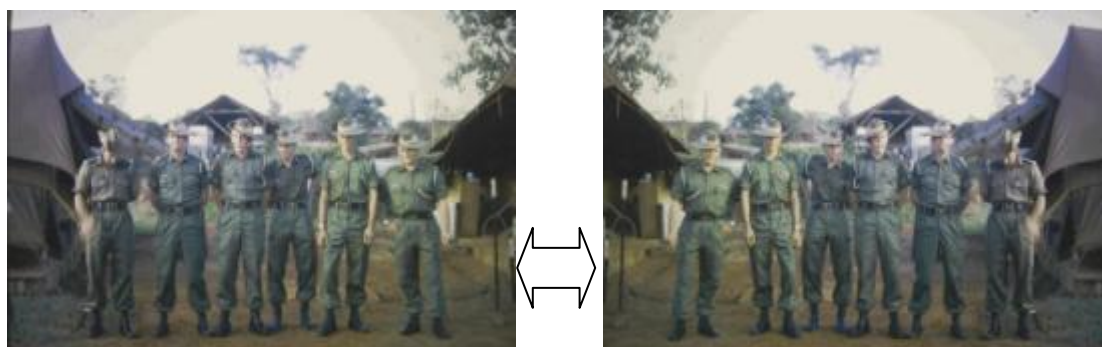
**The Entrance Long Jetty RSL Sub Branch in Long Jetty, New South Wales –  
313 The Entrance Rd Long Jetty NSW 2261**

Come and join in, have some lunch and a refreshing drop of something!

Contact Grahame Dignam and let him know you're coming at: [Sectreas131locators@gmail.com](mailto:Sectreas131locators@gmail.com)

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

. **Kim McGrath** – the ever watchful, couldn't resist picking up a very obvious error in a photo - "Hi Paul, I couldn't help notice that on Page 4 (October's E&Es) – (here photo bottom left) in the bottom group of six photos that the top left photo was of a bunch of Gunners from A Battery! The lanyards are on the left...and typical of Steam Gunners, they have their Slouch Hats on back to front – or... perhaps the photo is reversed. Hee Hee. Ubique, Kim"



...and continuing one more thing – Ernie Newbold's discoveries continue...

In quotation marks below the cartoon:

"I notice they're even observing a silence at the Paris Peace talks...!"



"I notice they're even observing a silence at the Paris peace talks . . .!"

. **Customs** – This is a continuance in the series suggested 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 next in the series...

#### **The Rouse and the Reveille**

After the one minute's silence, flags are raised from half mast to the masthead as the Rouse is sounded. Today it is associated with the Last Post at all military funerals, and at services of dedication and remembrance. Since Roman times, bugles or horns had been used as signals to command soldiers on the battlefield and to regulate soldiers' days in barracks. The Reveille was a bright, cheerful call to rouse soldiers from their slumber, ready for duty; it has also been used to conclude funeral services and remembrance services. It symbolises an awakening in a better world for the dead, and also rouses the living back to duty, now their respects have been paid to the memory of their comrades. The Rouse is a shorter bugle call that was also used to call soldiers to their duties; being short, the Rouse is the call most commonly used in conjunction with the Last Post at remembrance services. The exception is the Dawn Service, when the Reveille is played.

. **Ron Mason** Paul, the Vietnam Veterans National Museum located on Phillip Island had an open day this last weekend to welcome a New Zealand display & also the handover of a Huey helicopter. It was a well attended day & after all the official bit was over everyone could look around the place & they have put together an extensive & interesting display. Nowhere was there any reference to 131Div Loc Bty or the ANKPQ-1 radar, sound ranging or the part played by the LP's. Now the question is should this situation be rectified?

Now let's face it the Task Force could not survive without eyes & ears!

Over to you Paul if you would like to mention this in the newsletter.

Keep up the good work. Regards Ron Mason"

. **Dave Crowther** – “Hi Dicko, I had to journey to Sydney two Saturdays ago to see my "shrink" and called in to see **Don Simmons**. I got a photo of him (at right). He asked if he and I the only originals left. We discussed those gone to their rest.

He recalled two visitors ex 131 last year but could not remember their names. I reminded him it was **George Lane** and **Jerry Carroll** and he then remembered. I would appreciate photo and Don's contact details being published once more in *Eyes and Ears*. Don would also like to be put on mailing list as computer all at his bedside.

Kind regards dc”

I know the battalions are giant in comparison to our Det.131 but a stamp is still only 60 cents and a hello takes seconds to write. His rehab is located minutes by bus from Strathfield, West Ryde or North Ryde or even a text message to his mobile **0414 850 683**



. **Bill Taggart's** email and photo in October's edition of the sign at 31A got a response from **Ernie Newbold**, being an aficionado of things 31A and numerous other important facts, with some answers -



G'day Paul,

Also a cropped image from 31-A showing the sign a little clearer than it is in Bill's photo. The sign reads:

NOTICE

LP / OP 1 131 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 EXPENDABLE  
REFUSE FACILITIES PROVIDED

THANK YOU.

at the bottom of the sign is some artwork showing a Top Hat with the words "Top of the Town".

This sign was already in place when I moved up to 31-A at the beginning of September 1967 so I don't know who is responsible for the sign writing and artwork.

**Perhaps one of the readers may be able to shed some light on the sign's origins?**

As promised here is a photo of the national flags representing the countries that participated in the Vietnam War that were flown outside the Free World Forces building in Saigon, taken in 1967. Regards, Ernie.”



. **Richard Chaplin** responds to an item in an earlier *Eyes and Ears* sent in by **Steve Boutlis** with regards a possible documentary being made about Poms who were caught up involuntarily or maybe voluntarily in the Vietnam War, and here is **Richard's** response – "Hi Paul, In September's Newsletter you included a request from a UK film company (Bullseye Productions) which is looking for people who came to Australia from the UK and ended up being Called-Up into the Australian Army and sent to Vietnam.

I was one of those people. I came to Australia on my own in 1966 leaving my family in England. I was called-up and in the army within 22 months of arriving in Australia, and spent much of 1970 in Vietnam with the 131 Radar unit! I hasten to add that I need not have done National Service; instead I could have returned to England after being here the 2 years required under the Assisted Passage Scheme (otherwise known as "10 Pound POMS"), but then being unable to return to Australia for about 5 years. For some reason I decided to stay and do National Service!

Anyway, I emailed Craig Smith of Bullseye Productions with a synopsis of my story, and a few days later had a 45 minute phone call with him. He believes there is a story to tell the British public, although it is early days as I am the first person he has so far spoken to who actually served. He has spoken with several people in the UK who know someone who know someone who served! He clearly will need to identify other people in other arms of the military in order to build a decent story, but is not asking for additional help at this stage. And he will also likely need to have the BBC on board before progressing with a documentary.

I also sent him a few photos and directed him to Keith Ayliffe's history of the 131 Radar's in Vietnam. Craig committed to keep me informed of developments, so If this ends up going anywhere I will of course let you know.

Kind regards, Richard Chaplin"

. **Peter "Pappy" Gault** chimes in with one of "life's oddities" - "Hi Dicko, Just typed a short story in reply to your email & was nearing the end when I pressed the wrong button & the F-----'en thing disappeared doesn't it give you the shits!

Will try again - all well up here. I got the all clear 2 weeks ago no cancer to be seen. I gave chemo away last March & started taking an alternative treatment called Protocol & it is working for me (feel free to mention it to anyone who is in the same boat as me. They can get in touch. )

We have been away a few times in the van & the rest of the time I have been working around the ranch & sailing. Carol is well & keeping me inline - inventing jobs to do around the place.

I don't know if I told you about this bloke I met in a van park in Coffs - anyway he came up to me & asked if I was a Vet as he saw the ribbons sticker on the back window of the car, anyway, it turns out he was over there the same time as me - he was in the engineers. I told him about our L P being next to their kamikaze pit. We had a few beers and a bit of a chat he was a member of the vets motorcycle club & a nice bloke So he goes back to his van & comes back with a few photos & bugger me one of the photos is our hutchie 31C & there is Bob King sitting on the wall at the entrance to the tent & Vic cutting someone hair, could not see who was getting the hair cut .What a small world this bloke was from S Aust In the same park in Coffs same time in SVN & his got a bloody photo of our LP & tent in his caravan He left the next morning & I didn't get his address

Well Dicko that's about it for now still enjoying the Profiles & the E&Es Regards Pappy"

. **Bill Taggart - 1/83rd - Weekly Update 2012 - Week of Nov 12 - Nov 16, 2012** - In the Nov/Dec 2012 issue of VFW Magazine (on page 20) is a story on the 30th Anniversary Ceremonies of the Vietnam Memorial. On page 22 of this article, is a list of the Top 10 Donors to the Education Center at The Wall. I am very happy to announce that the Government of Australia is the 2nd highest donor to the Education Center. They have donated \$3,300,000. As they always do, the Aussies are there for us. Thanks so much for all that they have done and continue to do.

**(This issue is not yet online at the VFW website - a link to their website can be found on the 83rd website at... [http://home.comcast.net/~83rd\\_artillery/Websites\\_of\\_Interest/Veterans\\_Websites.htm](http://home.comcast.net/~83rd_artillery/Websites_of_Interest/Veterans_Websites.htm))**

. **Ed's email Question – "1989 – A memory Test"** – the responses grabbed a pretty mixed bag – here are the results expressed as a percentage of the answers received -

1. Is your name on the 1989 list of Members? = **19%**

2. The address list, even if you weren't an Assoc member your address is listed - so, if we were to send mail to your address listed then would you still receive it? = **31%**

3. Do you live in the same suburb? = **31%**

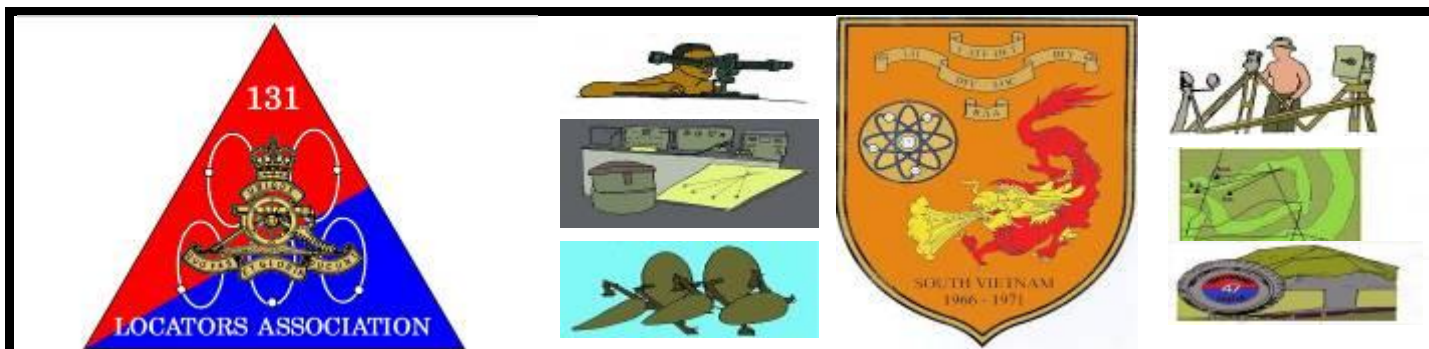
4. Do you live in the same city/town? = **54%**

5. If you've moved, can you remember how many times you've moved since those days? = **on average we've moved 2.3 times.** The highest number is 7 times and could still be a moving target!

Interesting stats with us looking like a bunch of nomads – though it could very well be a standard from a general population grouping. Though are the off-springs today moving all that much?

There is another 131 address list that was circulated either in the late '60s or early '70s (I had one but it has gone to land fill somewhere or recycled into toilet paper) which hopefully I'm getting a copy of, now that could be a corker to see who **hasn't** moved all that far from then! This address would no doubt be your discharge address.

However, along with other "relics" that have been discovered around this era they will no doubt form part of the intro article in December's *Eyes & Ears*.



**Committee members:**  
**President** – Allen Morley, **Vice President** – Bert Blink, **Treasurer/Secretary** – Grahame Dignam,  
**Public Officer** – Victor Danko, **Webmaster** – Bob Billiards, **Research Officer** – Ernie Newbold,  
**Designs and Development Officer** – Nick Proskurin, **Eyes & Ears Editor** – Paul Dickson  
**General members** – Ian Amos, Ged Carroll George Lane.  
**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 **Alaistair “Jock” McLean, Laurie Gallop and Alan Robb** to the Association fold.

**. 20<sup>th</sup> November** - The Annual General Meeting of Members of 131 Locators Association Inc was held, on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, NSW. 26 Humphries Rd Wakeley NSW 2176

Left to Right – Vic Danko (no collar eh!), George Lane, Allen Morley, **Geoff Blackwell**, Nick Proskurin, Bob Billiards, Ian Amos, Ernie Newbold and Grahame Dignam.

That had to be the “Hawaiian” pizza in front of George!

Geoff B was a pleasant unexpected surprise – only up for the day!



## 131 Locators Association Inc

### President’s Report for FY 2011 – 2012



On November 20<sup>th</sup>, a fine group of nine locators attended the Association’s Annual General Meeting at Canley Heights RSL. Geoff Blackwell came all the way from Adelaide, a gesture that was appreciated by all.

The audit carried out by Jim Fitzgerald – thanks Jim – showed that your organisation is solvent, with money in the bank.

The Association was informed that it remains financial, viable and, sustainable for the near future. The chairman noted that the age of our members is the limiting factor, something about which we can do nothing. Perhaps just too little was done, too late. That is no-one’s fault, more a reflection of the circumstances of our original coming together some 42 to 46 years ago under the 131 Detachment banner.

Without question, the highlight item for the reporting year was the unveiling and dedication of the Detachment 131 plaque at the Australian War Memorial on May 4, 2012. This event directly generated a new degree of interest in the Association.

Highlights reported for 2011-2012 included:

thirteen editions of *Eyes and Ears*, including a special which focussed on the plaque dedication; well done Dicko

attendance by members at the Coffs Harbour reunion

presence at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for 131 Battery

production and publication of forty locator profiles

regular Committee meetings and election of Regional Representatives to help spread the load

national Anzac Day march attendances and social follow up

attendance at Vietnam Veterans’ Day marches, and

a significant growth in material, photos and stories on the website.

Special recognition was extended to Committee members – Nick Proskurin, Ian Amos, Bob Billiards, Vic Danko, George Lane, Ged Carroll, Ernie Newbold, Grahame Dignam, Paul Dickson and Allen Morley- for making things

happen for the Association. Our Regional Representatives provided regional overview and contributed to our planning

program. Appreciation was extended to Bert Blink (ACT), Al Adams (VIC), Geoff Blackwell (SA), Barry Guzder (WA), Stuart Sporn (NT) and Terry Erbs (QLD) for their collective contribution.

Bert Blink was elected as Vice President, while the remainder of the Committee was as previously recorded.

Sadly the names of more of our number have now been etched onto the Association Honour Roll. Lest we forget them.

Allen Morley

President

## . Upcoming Events Calender –

. Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December – The Next 131 Locators Association general meeting is at 11.00am

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](mailto:Sectreas131locators@gmail.com)

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

## . web Performance...

If you've got more photos that you want added, just send them to: - Paul Dickson – web Photos [three-zero@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:billiard@pnc.com.au) You can always use the "Contact" page to get in touch and send a message.

## . Birthdays in the Battery...December –

Now let's pick the youngster out for the Month – **John Stanford** is the kid in this group – HAPPY 63<sup>rd</sup> John!

**Fred Lennon** cracks **85** this month – Happy Birthday Fred where ever you are!



Here's what **Hans Weber** looked like some 45 years ago – what was your 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday like back in '67 Hans?

| December | Name                 | Regt No | YOB  | SVN In     | SVN Out    | Comments         |
|----------|----------------------|---------|------|------------|------------|------------------|
| 1        | DAVID DOUGHERTY      | 2786594 | 1946 | 17 01 1968 | 04 02 1969 |                  |
| 1        | KEVEN BUSH           | 3792069 | 1946 | 18 02 1968 | 21 02 1969 |                  |
| 1        | NEVILLE SMITH        | 1734352 | 1946 | 01 07 1969 | 25 03 1970 |                  |
| 3        | RAYMOND MINNS        | 4410744 | 1941 | 20 05 1966 | 28 02 1967 | † 24.05.97       |
| 3        | CLIVE DREIS          | 2785766 | 1945 | 05 02 1968 | 03 12 1968 |                  |
| 6        | ALAN ROBB            | 5715343 | 1946 | 29 01 1968 | 21 01 1969 |                  |
| 7        | ANTHONY O'MARA       | 38334   | 1940 | 15 03 1968 | 18 03 1969 | RAEME † 01.01.85 |
| 7        | TERRY WESTERWAY      | 215818  | 1945 | 04 05 1966 | 07 05 1967 |                  |
| 8        | ROBERT WHITE         | 311537  | 1937 | 22 04 1966 | 16 05 1967 | † 1992           |
| 9        | ANDREW OPIE 2Lt.     | 43611   | 1944 | 04 05 1966 | 06 01 1967 |                  |
| 10       | HANS WEBER           | 3789591 | 1945 | 04 05 1967 | 02 04 1968 |                  |
| 12       | MICHAEL DAVIS        | 4720736 | 1948 | 20 01 1970 | 30 01 1971 |                  |
| 12       | CHRISTOPHER BRAZIER  | 2792185 | 1948 | 24 02 1970 | 25 02 1971 |                  |
| 13       | JOHN STANFORD        | 217765  | 1949 | 29 01 1969 | 21 01 1970 |                  |
| 13       | LAURENCE DARCY       | 215649  | 1945 | 04 03 1968 | 04 02 1969 | 12 Fd Regt.      |
| 13       | " "                  | 215649  | 1945 | 20 05 1971 | 05 08 1971 | 131              |
| 14       | PETER FLETCHER       | 2783429 | 1945 | 04 05 1967 | 12 12 1967 |                  |
| 14       | TOM KING             | 1411018 | 1937 | 12 12 1966 | 12 12 1967 |                  |
| 15       | GEOFFREY PRICE       | 5715931 | 1947 | 08 05 1969 | 25 02 1970 |                  |
| 16       | PHILLIP PERRIN Capt. | 53105   | 1936 | 29 01 1968 | 21 01 1969 |                  |
| 17       | TONY. GOLDSMITH      | 1732029 | 1945 | 04 05 1967 | 12 12 1967 |                  |
| 18       | JIM HOGNO            | 2783680 | 1945 | 03 01 1967 | 27 09 1967 |                  |
| 18       | TOM CHECKLEY         | 311534  | 1938 | 22 04 1966 | 05 08 1966 | † 05.08.66 KBA   |
| 19       | GEOFF BLACKWELL      | 4718307 | 1945 | 20 06 1967 | 21 05 1968 |                  |

|    |                    |         |      |            |            |                    |
|----|--------------------|---------|------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| 19 | PETER GAULT        | 2783644 | 1945 | 04 05 1967 | 27 09 1967 |                    |
| 19 | RODNEY BEASLEY     | 3797746 | 1948 | 04 03 1971 | 05 08 1971 | † 2001             |
| 19 | MICHAEL FERRIS     | 1733794 | 1945 | 23 12 1968 | 28 03 1969 | 1st Armoured Regt. |
|    | " "                |         |      | 30 03 1969 | 03 12 1969 | 131-RAEME          |
| 21 | BOB RETROT         | 1731922 | 1945 | 05 05 1967 | 30 01 1968 |                    |
| 21 | MICHAEL BOYLE Lt.  | 217004  | 1946 | 17 02 1970 | 11 02 1971 |                    |
| 21 | BLAIR SHEPPARD     | 1735563 | 1948 | 01 04 1970 | 04 03 1971 |                    |
| 22 | JOHN McGregor      | 3787376 | 1945 | 20 05 1966 | 30 04 1967 |                    |
| 22 | MICHAEL BURGESS    | 242895  | 1938 | 24 03 1968 | 26 03 1969 | RAEME              |
| 22 | PETER MEANEY       | 4719804 | 1947 | 03 06 1969 | 25 03 1970 |                    |
| 22 | RONALD RYAN        | 2793176 | 1948 | 19 08 1970 | 09 06 1971 |                    |
| 24 | RON. EVANS         | 3789614 | 1945 | 04 05 1967 | 20 02 1968 |                    |
| 25 | STEWART McALPINE   | 2787471 | 1946 | 08 07 1968 | 04 06 1969 |                    |
| 25 | ROBERT HOLDSWORTH  | 3793058 | 1945 | 04 01 1969 | 03 12 1969 | AACC               |
| 25 | PETER BREMNER      | 1734544 | 1947 | 16 04 1969 | 16 04 1970 |                    |
| 26 | CHRIS BOULLY       | 4717884 | 1945 | 17 04 1967 | 12 12 1967 |                    |
| 26 | DAVID BILLINGS     | 2793071 | 1946 | 19 08 1970 | 05 05 1971 | 4 Fd Regt.         |
| 28 | GEOF. MACAULAY WO2 | 35753   | 1936 | 27 11 1969 | 05 11 1970 | WO2                |
| 28 | LIONEL OUTEN       | 1732195 | 1945 | 05 05 1967 | 30 01 1968 |                    |
| 28 | JOHN MARTIN Lt.    | 43613   | 1941 | 25 02 1968 | 21 02 1969 |                    |
| 29 | BRIAN HAWKEY       | 1200572 | 1946 | 20 05 1966 | 29 04 1967 | AACC               |
| 29 | FRED LENNON Sgt.   | 29712   | 1927 | 20 05 1966 | 11 12 1966 |                    |

**Ed – 20** blokes not highlighted is looking a little better – c'mon let's have a crack at finding them?

**. Locator Profiles** – we've received **100** and we've sent out **99**.

**Ed** – we're just tidying up #100 and it should be out in a week. Now to get cracking on the next 100+!

**Barry Guzder** has a comment on Profiles (it arrived after George Clark's was distributed) – "Dicko, the only thing I dislike about all these profiles is that they all look so YOUNG! Keep reminding us of how much we have AGED! Barry Guzder"

**. Found...**

**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.

**Fred Walter** - Ken Osborne gave me **Fred's** email address and here's Fred's response to me – "Dear Paul, Thank you for your welcome message. My apologies for the delay in replying. I am in the middle of home renovations and by the time I get to the computer well after dark I am in no condition to think very clearly. I would like to be added to the "Eyes & Ears" mailing list. I look forward to receiving it. Regards, Fred Walter."

**Rieny Niewenhoff** gets in touch with us with – "Thought I'd share the following:

I've just had a very enjoyable couple of hours with Stan Patterson ( SVN 28/1/69 - 28/1/70) who has been visiting Geelong from Perth , where he lives.

Stan joined the Army as a regular and was with A Field Regiment and spent two years in Malaysia before being posted to 131 DLB, and assigned to the Bravo Radar section.

Like so many Stan has many fond and not so fond memories of his time in South Vietnam. He remembers a number of other guys and when I showed him a copy of ' Tracks of the Dragon' he was able to identify himself in a picture on page 269.

Others in that photo were Peter Bremner, Phil Ross, Graeme Williams, David Dodd, Bill Edwards, Les Connell and Terrence 'Lofty' Hayes (RIP)

Stan spent five years in the Army before getting a medical discharge and became an art teacher.

Since his 131 days Stan has travelled widely throughout Australia and overseas.

Stan read my item in Vet Affairs and made contact via email. He isn't a member of 131 Locators and I suggested he contact the Association and join, which he intends to do.

Regards, Rieny" **Ed – Stan** is now on our email database, thanks Rieny.

**Vic Danko** and his "**Locate a Locator**" **Program** called **Chris Bouilly** and said g'day, and now he's on our email list. Chris did a tour in 1967.

**Ed** - Great effort Vic – one down and only 231 to go! Hey, if anyone can help Locate a Locator it would be greatly appreciated.

## . E&Es Responses –

**Tony Foley** – “Hi Paul, a brief note (Early) to say Thanks, for a great Edition ! I haven’t digested it all yet, but clearly, this type of Recording & Publication is what Having an association is All about...Congratulations to you, for your work. Tony Foley Sunshine Coast Qld.”

## .Un-Vale –

**Ed** – The following story began with the mentioning in Vietnam Veterans Journal in the section titled “**Last Post**” where it listed the passing of three Locators - Bill Slape, Garry Smith (both of which had been mention in *Eyes & Ears* “**Vale**” section before, however the new listing was that of **Mackie, Peter Duncan** was the one that drew attention and was sent into me by **Neville Wortlehook** – “I was looking at the latest NSW Viet vets mag, and in the Last Post section it had PD Mackie as passing on the 19/5/12, I have tried ringing his wife Jane but no one is answering. Have you any info of his passing, I was away late May till mid June. Cheers Neville Wortlehook”

**Ed** – I sent out the following email on receipt of Mackie, Peter Duncan’s passing to gather some memories – “I have just been informed of the following -

Peter Duncan Mackie , 2184557, SVN 1970-71, DOB 21.09.49 passed away on 19.05.12.

Peter wasn’t on our email database, so I would appreciate anyone who knew him, just sending me a few lines that I can add into the Vale section of this month’s Eyes & Ears. Paul”

...and I received the following responses..., however, this may sound convoluted, but I’ll start with the last email first because it starts to shed light on a state of confusion -

**Ed** – Luckily we’ve got another “lightening strikes twice” story this time with **Peter Mackie**, as per **Stan Briggs** some time ago – **Peter has NOT passed!**

The following from, the ever persistent, **Dave Doyle** unravels what was going to be another sad chapter in Locator-land - thankfully it made it to us before publication -

“Hi Paul, well after much travelling around the western part of NSW over the last four days I made it to Katoomba where I went into the RSL and said to the secretary of the sub branch can you tell me about the death of Peter Mackie. He replied he is not dead - if he is we don’t know about it. So I got to see the CEO who said a definite no he was in the club couple of weeks ago and I said are you sure and proceeded to tell him about Peter’s name appearing in Reveille. He said definitely not - he has just had a hip operation and is walking with the aid of a stick. We found Peter’s number and I rang it and guess who answered the call but Peter himself. I said I was so glad to hear his voice I told him the story and Pete in only his dry sense of humour said well I will disappoint someone wont I . I then spoke with Sharon his wife and I missed seeing her at Katoomba but we plan to get together in Feb next year all being well. I will now notify the Mag and give them what for so they can print a retraction and you can inform all in our group that Mackie is alive and well. DD”

**Ed** – so after a few more “clarifying” emails we work out that it is NOT **Mackie, Peter Duncan** that died, but some of his mates thought it was so they responded.

**Ed**, again who can’t help himself and not wanting to waste an interesting story the following is a pre-view of what some of **Mckie, Peter Duncan** mates thought/think of him now – some good yarns and photos to go with it!



Mike Butler, **Peter McKie** & Kim Hewitt



**Peter McKie**, Mike Butler,  
Bill Vanzetten and Peter Colman



**Peter McKie**

**Thanks to Mike Butler for the photo memories.**

**Peter Saint** – “Paul, we served together for a couple of months, Pete was badly injured in the mine incident of 3 Feb 1970.

We saw him at the Welcome Home Parade and he seemed in good spirits, I do recall Dave Doyle (Coffs Harbour area) did see him after the parade, but like a lot of 131’ers we did lose contact.

Mick Butler would have known him a bit longer and better than me.

I am totally shattered, he was a top bloke. Regards Peter”

**Kevin Browning** – “Paul - Mick Butler, Peter saint and Dave Doyle should be able to assist best with information on Peter. He was the driver when the land rover hit the mine in 1971, Dave being the front seat passenger. If you do not get responses let me know. I visited Peter in hospital out at Ingleburn when they sent him home. He was from Katoomba and had gone to school with my nephew. Regards Kevin”

**Kim Hewitt** – “Hi, Paul. Pete Mackie was my constant survey partner and friend for nearly my whole tour. I am devastated. We even had our own language. I last time I saw him was at the welcome home parade. Despite special shoes, he was obviously in pain...but he marched anyway. That is the kind of guy he was. He and I shared MANY laughs...Vale Peter Mackie

I would like to send my condolences to the Mackie family and to Dave Doyle, who had a lot of time for Pete. Although I just received the news, I send my best wishes to those who loved Pete

**Mike Butler** – “Paul, I served with Peter in SVN until he was badly injured in the mine incident with me on 3 Feb 71 (with Dave Doyle and Len Walker). We did the survey course together at North Head. He was a great guy and came from Katoomba. He introduced me to schooners in several Manly hotels when we were at North Head!! I hadn't attempted to contact him and didn't actually know where he ended up after the army or whether he got married (or children). Regards, Mike Butler”

**Dave Doyle** – shares some memories of time with Pete – “Hi Paul, Peter was my driver who was with me when we ran over the anti-tank mine. Married to Sharon with a daughter, Kate, and a son Hamish. I was devastated when I read it in vale of Vietnam Vets mag. No doubt it would have come as a surprise to all of those guys who was with him in SVN. Peter was a quiet unassuming guy who loved to walk down in the Megalong Valley. He was an outdoor type he worked on the Katoomba council as a draughtsman town planner and would come up to Port for holidays now and then. I have not seen him for a couple of years, but he and Sharon should have been up here this year. Peter had 5 acres out near Bathurst which he would go bush in from time to time. His better half, Sharon, was a Nurse who looked after him well. Peter had many operations on his ankle, neck and back and it did leave him a little depressed at times. I have not been able to contact Sharon at this stage so I do not know the full story of Peters passing . I will miss the ANZAC day call that we kept in contact with each other. DD”

It's good to have **Mackie, Peter Duncan** still amongst us...**Nothing like a bit of confusion...**



**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](mailto: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 – The next Meeting will be held at Paddington RSL on **10 February 2013**, commencing at 1115 hrs. Members are cordially invited to attend.

Details of scheduled Committee meetings will be available in the next issue of the *Associations Newsletter* LOCREP. <http://www.locatingartillery.org/index.htm>



**Australian Artillery Association –** [www.australianartilleryassociation.com](http://www.australianartilleryassociation.com)



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](http://www.at-ease.dva.gov.au)

## . 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 83<sup>rd</sup> 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/](http://83rd_artillery.home.comcast.net/~83rd_artillery/)

**Editor contact email:** [three-zero@hotmail.com](mailto:three-zero@hotmail.com) **Ed –** Paul 'Dicko' Dickson

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