

THE EYES and EARS

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This edition get's into a wide range of topics and here's a list of what's on offer...

- . **ANZAC Day** – continues rounding up some memorable occasions - Pages 2 to 5
- . **Mike Butler** – meets a couple of mates in Canberra Page 6
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- . **Association news** – a great support letter from the Association starts on Page 11

There is heaps more plus a good yarn and map from **Bill Taggart** (1/83rd Group) on Page 16, so settle in...

ANZAC Day 2013 – the Legend continues...



Most of the 131 marchers on the steps of Brisbane GPO.

. Terry Erbs, our Association's stalwart and Regional Representative, reports in from Brisbane on ANZAC Day with – "Hi Paul, Hope all well with you, we had a great day in Brisbane and here follows my report. Cheers, Terry Erbs

ANZAC Day Brisbane 2013

Over past years it's become a tradition to travel interstate to march with mates, last year it was Sydney and this year it was Brisbane's turn.

On Wednesday evening it was planned to meet for pre-dinner drinks at the Sofitel Hotel but being "typical gunners" they found my usual drinking spot at Fihelly's Bar, where the beer was cheaper which was more to their liking!

After a short walk down to the Eagle Street restaurant precinct we discovered our dinner venue crowded and noisy, not a good place for thirsty and near deaf gunners. So it was to plan "B", then plan "C" as other possible restaurants were either too expensive, noisy or couldn't accommodate our large group. Finally Peter Creedon made an "executive decision" and the Coffee Club became "ours" and it was a good choice with everyone enjoying a reasonable feed and a drink or two. As many planned to attend the Dawn Service in Anzac Square it wasn't a late night and we all left early for a few hours sleep ahead of a long day.

Kevin Browning and I went out to 20th STA Regiment's Dawn Service and were caught in the 4am heavy traffic congestion as soldiers, family and visitors all converged onto the one road into the Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera.

We got there just in time to share a "Gun Fire Breakfast" with the other 650 soldiers and family attending the 5am service. The large numbers were due to the Regiment hosting both 16th Aviation Brigade and 1st Intelligence Battalion. The service was held at the Regiment's Memorial Wall, where Kevin laid a wreath on behalf of the Detachment 131 Div Loc Bty Vietnam 1966-71. Afterwards, breakfast was organized behind the Menz Club, where the bar was open with crown & anchor and two-up games running. Because of the activities organized at the Regiment, few recent veterans marched with us in the city.

As usual, the 131 banner was prominent at the assembly point in George St. and more than 25 veterans marched in warm sunny weather, lead by Lt Col [RTD] Phil Swinsburg ex CO 20th STA. Everyone, particularly interstate visitors were impressed by the large appreciative crowd which lined George, Adelaide and Creek Streets. As on previous years, after the march, we then took the group photo, with the banner, on the steps of Brisbane GPO.

Then for some it was a leisurely walk to South Bank and the Ship Inn hotel for lunch. While others used the Brisbane River ferries to get there and by 12.30pm all were settled in for a great afternoon of drinks, good food and catching up with mates and family. After a very enjoyable day it was agreed to repeat the occasion in Melbourne next year.

Most of those who marched are in the group photograph on the GPO steps, but several missed the order to "fall in" due to "gunner deafness" or drifted away with family.

Those who marched included locals David Dodd, Peter Bremner, Joe Losiak, Grant Perrin, Steve Hall, Nev Smith, T.C.White, Phil Swinsburg and Terry Erbs, while Brian Smythe came from the Sunshine Coast and Graham Williams and Brett Rainsford came from the Gold Coast. Interstate visitor and evergreen "muso" Gary Lovell came out of the hills behind Byron Bay while Kev Browning, Jeff Schafer, Russ Jackson, John Henshaw and Michael Quinlan flew into town. Caravaners Peter Creedon, Peter Larkin, Peter Meaney and Jessie Owen all drove in, and like other southern migrating "grey nomads", were planning to spend more time in our "Sunshine State".

On the right - Kevin Browning & Jo Fabri ex RSM 20th STA, standing in the gardens behind the Menz Club.



On the left are Kev Salter and Lt Col [RTD] Phil Swinsburg ex CO 20th STA having a chat in George St. before the Brisbane march.

On the right - A fine bunch of diggers behind the 131 banner, halted in Adelaide St during the Brisbane march.



. **John Dellacca**, Victoria's ANZAC Day custodian, lets us know what happened in Melbourne this year – "Hi Paul, attached are Anzac Day Photos from Melbourne small turn up of 131 but an impressive one!!!! Large crowd turned out usual suspects, Mick Butler, Alan Adams, Iain Kennedy, couple of unknowns and John Dellacca. Keep up the great work regards John Dellacca"



. George Lane – PIONEERS –

"I send the photo on the right of the 'PIONEERS' at Coffs reunion they are - Rear row L-R George Lane, Laurie Gallop (hasn't been seen for 45years), Ray Smith, Mick (spike) Chase.

Front row L-R Keith Dean, "Shortie" Gow, Dave Doyle, Ged Carroll. More on the reunion later needless to say it was great to catch up with Laurie Gallop. George."



OUR Gallipoli Contingent (just about!)

The Reunion commenced with a 'Meet and Greet' on Anzac Eve. The numbers were down compared to previous years but that didn't stop this from being a great reunion. It started out a bit iffy with Ray Smith having a slight turn but he came good. Laurie Gallop came and this was great as he hadn't been seen for 45 years as you can imagine a lot of tales were exchanged I'm glad his wife Anne was so understanding. Laurie & Anne enjoyed themselves so much

they promised to attend again. Other Vets from interstate Ray Smith (TAS), Ron Mason (VIC) a lot of catching up was done by all. ANZAC Day commenced with the Dawn Service 5.30am which was very well attended. The march started at 9:30am and a great number took part. I forgot to mention that our first CO Paddy Gowans was in attendance and it was great to see him and hear his stories. We retired to the Coffs Ex-services for a great lunch and were entertained by Maurie Fields son the comedian and there wasn't a dry eye in the club if you get the chance go and see him. Allan Harrison retired the Locators Banner as the Combined STA Banner will be available for next year. We were kept entertained by Dave Auld and Dave Doyle going to various venues for sightseeing and BBQ lunches. The Regimental Dinner on the Saturday was very well attended and a lot of photos taken which I'm sure will appear in E&E shortly. My thanks go to David Auld and Dave Doyle for a great time. George."

. Leigh Hemming – sent the following in whilst travelling on after Gallipoli – it's stuff that makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand up –

"Paul, Our visit to Gallipoli for the ANZAC day commemorations was a truly great and memorable experience. For the Dawn Service the weather was just perfect. It was a morning of an absolutely clear sky, very cold of course, but to top it all off there was a full moon shining brightly over the water. It could not have been any better for this occasion. The service at Lone Pine later that morning was held under a clear blue sky. The RAN band provided the music and was supported by a choir from All Hallows' and Gregory Terrace schools.

Both services were very well attended and we were very fortunate to have a well educated Turkish guide who knew the history of both sides of the Gallipoli campaign extremely well. He in fact had taken General Cosgrove on a one on one tour of the area a couple of years before. In fact if anyone wants a top quality guide for anywhere in Turkey I have his contact details.

The next day he took us to all of the sites again and we were able to spend more time at each with not as many people to contend with.

I am truly glad I made the pilgrimage to Gallipoli in my lifetime and for those who may not have done so may I highly recommend it to you. To stand at these sacred sites and reflect what once was and to also hear the sentiments from a Turk was a lifetime experience which should be experienced by all Australians.

I will send you a couple of photos separately – see below.

I hope this finds you and Helen well and that you have enjoyed your travels through South America.

I am at present sailing up the Rhine river heading for Amsterdam.

Regards, Leigh."



. **Mike Butler** sent in the following with regards to catching up with a couple of blokes in Canberra recently –“Paul/Grahame, here is a photo of three 131ers at a mini-reunion in Canberra. They are (left to right) **Mike Butler, Les Falkai and Pete Saint**. Les and his wife came over from South Australia and I drove up with my wife from Melbourne to see Pete who lives in Canberra between 8 - 12 April. Had a great time catching up and visiting the sights. Cheers Mike Butler”



PS. Forgot to mention that the photo was taken at the Vietnam Memorial.

. **Jill Nieglos** gives us her final account in a series which has bought a smile and maybe a lump in the throat as we've read the previous offerings. Jill's reminiscences in this piece take her back to Vietnam at another time, but to a place she has forged a bond to repair a damaged heart...



Return to Vietnam...

May 1st, 2005. I'm on Air Vietnam, flying from Da Nang to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), the first leg of my journey back to the USA. It's hard for me to believe thirty years have passed since I have been in Vietnam. On approach, I see bomb craters and burned out jeeps around the airfield; this is what it looked like in 1975. I wondered if the government was unable to clean things up, or had it been left this way on purpose? Probably a little bit of both, I decide. As we land, I recall my trips here with Pan Am and reflect on the events which brought me back here after such a long time. I remember how I had felt being shot at while flying out of this very same airport – no bullets this time, thank goodness. My connection with Asia began with R & R flights to Vietnam during the war. Later, I married a dentist and we moved to Hawaii where he was easily able to set up a practice - but I faced a far more challenging problem. Pan Am was a worldwide airline, and all stewardesses were required to speak another language to be hired. I had some Spanish, but was never very good at it, no matter how hard I tried. Perhaps my getting hired had less to do with my linguistic ability than the fact that I had batted my eyelashes at the interviewer a lot. Who knows? Anyway, I got lucky and was hired. My problem was how to become Honolulu-based, as HNL was an Asian language base only! Gawd, my Spanish was terrible, but my Japanese was non-existent. I knew I had to learn Japanese, or be forced to commute to San Francisco for the rest of my career. So, I took Japanese classes like a crazy person, fourteen hours a day, and within five months I became the first Caucasian ever based in HNL. Thank goodness, learning Japanese proved to be a whole lot easier for me than learning Spanish.

Whenever we left HNL for Tokyo, our crew consisted entirely of Japanese-speaking stewardesses; from there, we split up to provide Japanese language on other flights. I didn't use English much at work, and in Japan, not at all. On layovers, I often stayed with a Japanese family that had Pan Am connections. Only one of the family spoke English, but not well. Immersion time! With this arrangement, my Japanese improved dramatically. I became fluent, and learned much about Japanese customs and cooking. Trust me, my high school home economics courses had not prepared me for this!

I was based in Honolulu for sixteen years. Much of the population there is Asian, and I practically became Asian myself. I ate Asian food with chopsticks from Japanese dishes, spoke Japanese, wore Japanese clothes, listened to Japanese radio, and slept on a futon. I even adopted a baby girl from Korea – that must have been quite a sight, my son DJ and I with our blond hair, and my Asian daughter Christianna with her black hair.

Christianna began college at the U. of Hawaii, but after one semester with a new boyfriend, working 20 hours a week, and “a few” parties; she decided volunteer work would be a better use of her time (and my money). So for the next few years, she worked in Nepal, Panama and El Salvador, and by 2004 was teaching second grade in Thailand. Early in 2005 she called me and asked, “Hey Mom, wanna come work in an orphanage in Vietnam with me?” I answered, “Heck yeah” and began making the preparations for the trip. Getting the visa for a communist country, I must say, was very interesting.

On the plane I began recalling the many times I had flown into Da Nang with Pan Am, but this 2005 trip was going to be different, and special. I was going to meet Christianna, who was coming from Thailand where she was teaching; and we were scheduled to work together with Global Volunteer Network in a small town near Da Nang. When I got to the baggage area, I saw about a hundred people with black hair, all about the same height. I realized that trying to find Christianna in this crowd was hopeless. It was impossible to spot her, but my blonde hair stood out, and soon I heard a familiar voice. "Mom, Mom, over here!" She was jumping up and down and waving excitedly at me. Golly, it had been such a long since I had seen her. I was happy, and very relieved...just two months before, she had literally outrun the tsunami. Yes, that tsunami, the one that killed 240,000 people. I gave her a big hug, grateful that she was safe and with me now. Looking around, I asked, "Christianna, how will I ever be able tell you apart from everyone else? I'll have to watch you like a hawk when we go to the markets."

After our hugs and hellos, we made our way outside. It was HOT! In that instant, all my memories of Vietnam came back to me - the smells, the oppressive heat, and the god-awful humidity. These memories had been tucked away in my mind and all but forgotten when Christianna had suggested I join her in Vietnam. Standing in that luggage area glistening with sweat, I wondered, how could I have forgotten this heat? Oh well, we're here now, and ready to embark on an exciting journey together. Thankfully, people from the volunteer agency came to greet us, so no worries about getting lost on the way to Tam Ky. I asked Yen, our translator, "Where is Tam Ky?" She responded, "About thirty kilometres south of here." Looking at my map, I noticed it was near the infamous My Lai. Oh, oh. I caught my breath. How would people around there respond to us Americans? They probably had relatives who were killed there that day.

In the car, we peppered our new friends with a thousand questions, and sometimes got hilariously funny answers. Vietnamese is tonal, so very often the words themselves sounded funny to our American ears. Fortunately, laughing is a common pastime in Vietnam. We laughed a lot on the way to our lodgings, and by the end of our ride we were comfortable with Yen and Tuan. We unloaded our gear and got settled, wondering what exciting adventures lay ahead.

Christianna and I were busy catching up, chatting nonstop during the ride and on into the night. I asked her, "How is it living in Asia? Do you like it? What are the downsides?" She had told me stories on the phone, some of which had not been good. Asia is racist, far more than I realized. Although born in an orphanage in Korea, she had been whisked to America as a tiny infant and had always thought of herself as "just another American," but she found out that Asians often think differently though. She had experienced some pretty ugly incidents in Thailand. How would it be in Vietnam, we wondered, the country America had tried to help, but had nearly destroyed in the process?

Bright and early the next morning, we met our cooks. What happy people! They couldn't stop hugging us. The language barrier was not a barrier at all. Sign language, smiles, and laughter worked just fine. We met other volunteers from various countries...eight of us, as I remember. Breakfast was served...95 degrees and we were eating Pho, a traditional Vietnamese hot soup, with French baguettes. Yummy, even though we "glistened" even more. Vietnam in March is not known for cool weather. After breakfast, we headed out to the baby orphanage where we met about twenty-five kids aged one month to about five years. We sang funny kid songs in English - which we all spoke, but they didn't, of course - and many songs in Vietnamese, which we couldn't pronounce correctly, resulting in gales of laughter. We tried to learn the numbers and colours in Vietnamese so we could teach them to the kids. You can imagine how well that went...remember, Vietnamese is tonal, and the result was quite hilarious. We generally entertained them and ourselves and laughed a lot.

In one of the cribs, we found a tiny one-month-old baby. I knew what Christianna was thinking - that she had been a baby just like this one - but in a different orphanage. Her heart melted on the spot. We called the baby "Hope." There was never a time we went to this orphanage that Christianna wasn't holding Hope while playing with the other kids.

One experience is seared into my mind. One morning a grandmother dropped off her two-year-old granddaughter, telling the caretakers, "My daughter cannot afford to feed her." The grandmother was crying and the little girl was inconsolable; I barely held it together as I cradled the girl and tried to comfort her. I held her all day, and many days afterward. I can't imagine having to give my child to an orphanage because I couldn't feed her. Sad doesn't do justice to my feelings at the time - it tore my heart out.

Each day after lunch we rode our bikes to the high school to teach English. Tam Ky had almost no cars; bikes or motorbikes were the usual transportation. Thinking back to my worries about how we would be treated, I laughed. The kids in this town must have had exceptional hearing; every time I rode down the street, kids would pop out of their houses, every block it seemed, and holler "Hi, how you?" I never tired of hearing this endearing salutation. The high school we worked in was for the smartest kids in the area, and they spoke some English. We were there to help them practice it. Country kids had to stay in town all week to attend school. That was where we really learned about Vietnam - from these endearing kids. I made several good friends, and am Facebook friends with two of them still. We had a great time getting to know one another while riding our bikes and exploring the town. One day we found a cache of shell casings at least twenty feet square. This was thirty years after the war, mind you!

One afternoon at the high school, I was teaching English by discussing our hobbies. I told them I raised guide dog puppies for blind people. They were amazed - they had never heard of such a thing. One by one they shared with me how much they loved Internet cafes, rock music, and hanging out with their friends. But when I got to one girl, she answered by saying that her hobby was, "Taking care of my little sister." Puzzled, I asked, "What do you mean?" She said, "She can't walk and we don't have money for a wheelchair." Then she wrote on a word on a piece of paper, and

slid it across the table. The word was Dioxin. I was stunned. I didn't realize how much collateral damage had persisted so long after the war.

Most endearing to me were the orphanage kids who were 8 to 10 years old. Most were not really orphans - their parents just couldn't afford to feed them, and they had become wards of the state. They were hungry, not for food, but love. We taught them English by playing games and loving them. I enjoyed being with them so much that when my contracted month was up, I extended for another month. I asked my husband to buy a stuffed toy for each child and to come and work with me for that month. We totally enjoyed every minute in Vietnam. My favorite memory of these kids happened one night as I was arriving at the orphanage to teach. It was 7 pm and dark already. When I entered the yard on my bike, I was barely able to put it down before one kid jumped into my right arm, then another into my left arm, and in two more seconds, another on my back. All the while they were laughing and hugging me. I still cherish that memory!

On weekends, we went to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hoi An, an ancient port and very interesting. The motorbike ride getting there was more than interesting. Yikes! Once there, we always stayed at the same hotel. They had a swimming pool, sold Heineken beside the pool, and had bikes for us to use. What could be better? Don and I found out that the Vietnamese factories had not yet mastered quality control. Passing through an intersection one day, I applied my brakes, and the cable snapped! At the same, Don's bicycle seat fell off! Omigosh! But, we made it through the intersection. I looked at Don, who was holding the seat in his hand - we sat down and broke into hysterical laughter.

Markets were always lively. Drying fish flapping in the breeze hung over the flower lady, who was sitting next to the lady selling brassieres. Hawkers were selling their wares, always trying to outshout one another. It was totally chaotic and very different from shopping in America. When we bought something from a person, we became instant friends; and if we returned and purchased another item from the same person, we were invited to their home. Everybody was smiling, all the time, making going to the markets a joy. This was such a contrast from war scenes of thirty years ago, and my own memories.

One weekend, all the volunteers went to Hoi An as usual; however, we had three orphanage babies in the hospital, so I stayed behind and worked with them. Goodness, I'll bet thirty black-haired people were peering at me through the windows. I don't think any of them had ever seen blond hair. Thank goodness, one of the high schoolers came with me to translate. I was holding Hope, Thuan was holding another baby, and a Vietnamese woman was holding the third. Speaking through my translator, I asked her "Do you have any children?" She immediately hung her head. Hmm, strange, I thought. "How many children do you have?" "Two," she answered, "but one is in Meechoogann." I couldn't understand anything she said. Through Thuan, I finally understood she had a son who had been adopted and was living in Michigan. I said, please bring the adoption papers and any pictures you have to the hospital tomorrow, and she agreed. The next day, I took pictures of her holding a photo of her son and his adoptive parents. I had a plan. I told her I would look for her son's adoptive parents in "Meechoogann." When I got home, I googled them got their phone number, and called them. The mom didn't believe me; they had been told their son no siblings. The incredulous dad called me back twenty minutes later and began asking questions, such as "where were you in Vietnam?" And "how did you meet this lady?" I described the photos I had, and emailed them to him. It was his son, and now they knew their son had a brother. Eventually the Michigan family went to Vietnam to meet the mother and brother, and sent me pictures of the reunion. Had I been in the right place at the right time, or what?

We were sad when our time was up and we had to leave the country. We wanted to make our last day with the 8-10 year olds special, so we hatched a plan - we had a party at the local "amusement park." The favorite attraction there was a big cage with a million plastic balls (think McDonalds Playland). What fun it we had throwing balls at one another - to be acting like a ten year old again! We played fuss ball, too, and the kids squealed with glee whenever they scored. When the party was over, we walked to a nearby stand where a man was crushing raw sugar cane. The kids were so excited, begging us for a cup. Of course we bought all of them one. Have you ever tasted raw sugar cane? We couldn't drink it - sickly sweet - but they were delighted. Tuan had come on his motor scooter, an extravagance for Vietnam, and gave four of the ten-year-olds a ride back to the orphanage. Can you imagine five on one motor scooter? They were laughing excitedly at this wonderful surprise, and I still have that image in my mind. What a contrast it was to be with these children with these children here now - in 2005 - knowing that even as "orphans," they were happy. That war, the one I remembered, was such a long time ago, and is now just a history lesson.

Today, when I think of Vietnam, I smile. **Jill**

...a sincere THANKS to Jill for sharing some of her memories which were a part of our combined lives at a time when a "ray of sunshine", such as yourself and others, entered our lives.

...and continuing one more thing - Ernie Newbold's discoveries...

. **Customs** – This is a continuing 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 are deeply rooted traditions which we identify with...

The gun carriage

There appears to be little symbolism attached to the use of a gun carriage to carry the casket in a funeral procession. The gun carriage may have been adopted as a dignified and suitably military way to save soldiers from having to carry the casket. In the mid-1800s, the Queen's Regulations were amended to permit the use of a gun carriage and horses to carry a casket to a burial ground, but only when it was over a mile away. Since those days, the gun carriage has become an accepted part of military and state funerals.



The coffin of the Unknown Warrior is transported on a gun carriage past the cenotaph in London, Armistice Day 1920.

. **Concerned Sydney** has come up with another “gem” (at least he/she is consistent!) – “Dear Ed, Just spent some time enjoying a quiet read of the latest *Eyes & Ears*. Terrific. My doppelganger antenna buzzed when I saw the WA photo. Surely there was cartoonist Larry Pickering in the group? No! we are advised that it was Peter Hopper, with cap. You do the comparison. PS Barry Guzder has put on a bit of condition since selling his business. Concerned, Sydney



The real Larry Pickering



The real Peter Hopper?

. **Rieny Niewenhoff** responded to an email from **Ed** with reference to the signed banner/flag that Rieny had with him when they met over lunch in Melbourne recently. The photo of the flag was taken in the restaurant - “Hi Paul, I have penned a few thoughts/memories of that flag. Rieny”



The South Vietnam Flag



Rieny Nieuwenhof 'Van' – sends this information about a tradition which seems to have come in with the latter tours with the Locator Battery's deployment in SVN. He showed us his 'memento' flag at a gathering in Melbourne earlier in the year.

Background to the story.

I joined 131 DLB as a replacement in Feb. 1971 as Bombardier (Temp) as section leader for Arty Intelligence. Capt. Tim Ford was CO.

I think it was sometime in June when the Prime Minister, William McMahon, declared that the Australian government would withdraw 1000 troops from SVN by August 1971. (There was an election coming up, but the decision to withdraw all troops had already been made). 131 DLB and elements of the Armoured corps were identified as among the groups to make up the 1000 men. We didn't know the actual dates, but began preparations to dismantle the Detachment's lines in Locator's Lane. When not on duty at the Nui Dat or Horseshoe LPs, members dismantled tents, emptied sand bags, loaded trucks with corrugated iron and did our best to get star pickets out of the ground. I remember moving into the salubrious quarters of the huts, vacated by the first surveyors to go.

Part of the process for departure was the regime of pills to be taken, the last pill (orange in colour I think and the biggest) signified the end of the course of the prescription pills, and we would be medically ready to leave. We also started the countdown "I've got # many days and a wakey to go". Unfortunately, we would not all be leaving on the same day, so some had more days than others. Others were transferred to 12th Field regiment and so ended the longest continuous deployment of an artillery unit, besides the Training Team, in SVN.

Another 'tradition' became the signing of a flag prior to departure, as a memento of our time in SVN. Guys would decorate their flags with towns they have visited eg. Baria, Vung Tau, Dat Do, Saigon, Nui Dat, Xyuen Moc, Woa Long, Long Dien, Long Binh. They would write their name and hometown address. Often there was a little message as well eg. 'High Forever' Love Fang (aka Peter Fielden – Laverton); 'Best of Luck' Mucho (aka Joe Kocka – Paddington); 'Best Wishes to the two striper Nashos' (Gary Carthew – Tamworth); 'If you can't smoke or boot it, shoot it' (Ian Campbell – Kooyong). The flag went around the section and there were quite a few names.

Central to the flag was the universal sign for peace – a true sentiment of what we were feeling toward the end of 1971. On 5th August I and a few others boarded the Caribou for a short flight to Ton Son Nuit and after a long wait a QANTAS flight to Sydney. We (at least) some of us were on the way HOME! I think the last remaining members of 131 also departed SVN soon after.

I was discharged from the Army in November 1971, having completed the prescribed period of military service, and returned to my 'normal' life.

Maybe others had flags also and could share their memories?

. Locator Decal – Spotted by s very sharp-eyed shopper in a shopping centre car park overseas. The "spotter" couldn't wait so the owner was not identified. But one thing's for sure the Locator wouldn't have had any problems finding his car with the decal on the back window! Possibly the only one in that country!



Have you seen any around?

. MISSING PERSONS –

OK I'm following up on emails that "bounce-back" to me for one reason or another and I gather, in the main, it has to do with the owner of the address changing carriers etc. So the following is a list of blokes whose last attempt came back undelivered – Jeff Reid, Leigh Baker, David Myers and Barry Heard

Ed – the 4th has come and gone now like the month of May, however, it does strike an accord with me and my fellow Locators who embarked on a life changing episode on that day 46 years ago. It had happened to the "Pioneer" group plus other intervening "Reos" during the period prior to our arrival and we were followed by numerous Locators, individually and in groups who replaced each and every one of us for the following 4 years.

Last year we unveiled a plaque somewhere near to this date commemorating our being in South Vietnam, a small gesture to acknowledge a presence. Not only were the ones who attended lucky, but so were the ones amongst us who could hear and read about it lucky.

The unlucky ones are the Locators who are not amongst us to share this memorial, but it is them we will remember with great fondness.

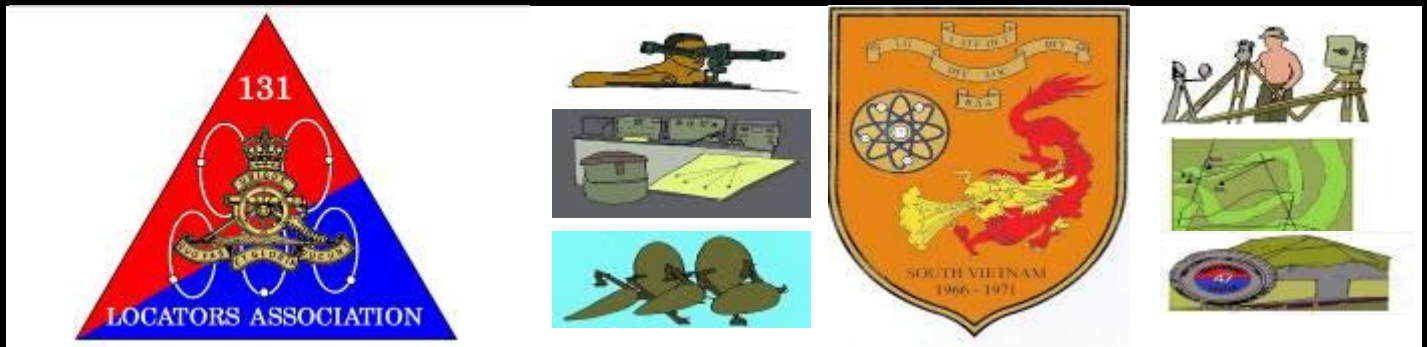
I guess what I'm trying to say is we should make the effort to contact and be able to be contacted as we shared something that was a privilege and needs to have a very small, but significant, place in history.

It saddens me every time I look at our Honour Roll to see the annual growth of names. However, what saddens me more are the names listed that don't contain definitive information – these are blokes, some whom were in SVN at the same time as me, though totally unknown to me, others who shared time and space with the rest of us but the final information is incomplete.

On top of this is what scares me more is the "unknown" – we have contact with some 220 blokes (not all Vets either) and figures say that there were 463 Locators who toured; take away the "known late Locators" of which there are 66 (again, not all Vets and of course, how accurate is this list?) and that still leaves some 177 who WE, and I mean ALL of us collectively, haven't the faintest idea where the hell they are!

My appeal is – can we make an all out effort to "Locate a Locator" this year and try to take the heightened sadness out of the equation when we discover one of us passed some time ago, plus how good is it when someone reports in saying – "Hey I met ? who I haven't seen since?" My heart literally skipped a beat when 2 blokes, who I knew, were reunited with us in the past 12 months – they'd basically had no contact with any of us for 40 odd bloody years! Never been to a march, never been to a reunion – amazing!

C'mon let's just locate blokes – even if we gather their names and they don't want contact, let's just find out that they're still with us – please?



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 a couple of good blokes –
Rod Beasley and Neville Smith to the Association fold.

Presidential Perambulations...

May is an important month in the 131 annals. The first group – the Pioneers – arrived this month in SVN way back in 1966. The first of the full reo group arrived a year later on May 4th or 5th. A very significant change in lifestyle for 20 year old Nashos. And equally so for those young regular soldiers from the Battery.

The 131 Detachment plaque was unveiled in May 2012 at the Australian War Memorial. Bert Blink tells me it is looking good and not in need of Brasso. If you are visiting the War Memorial make sure that you take the time to pay your respects at the plaque.

Then there was a welcome e-mail out of the blue. John Vitovsky had been discovered in rural Victoria. We had shared a HQ tent for nine months at Nui Dat, so that intervening period of 45-years has now to be filled in. Our co-occupants Ray Hutchinson and Bill Thomas have disappeared into the ether. I was also absolutely delighted to catch up with Jim Hogno on Anzac Day in Sydney after a similar extended break.

You can see 'supervisor' Jim in the picture.

Here's Jim



. Upcoming Events Calender –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting **Date: Tuesday 18/06/2013 at 11:00hrs**

Venue: **Canley Heights RSL& Sporting Club** - 26 Humphries Rd., Canley Heights for directions - <http://www.canleyheightsrsl.com.au/contact-us/> You're all welcome – in fact your being there could add a valuable contribution.

. INQUIRY INTO ELIGIBILITY FOR THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CAMPAIGN MEDAL – by the Australian Government Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal.

Terms of Reference

The Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (the Tribunal) is directed to inquire into and report on eligibility for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal is classed as a foreign award which was offered to a range of countries (including Australia, New Zealand and the United States) that supported the Government of the

Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Australia accepted the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and has been issuing it to members of the Australian Defence forces and accredited philanthropic organisations that it has assessed as eligible ever since.

Eligibility criteria for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal were determined by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Specifically, the Tribunal is directed to inquire and report on:

- application of the eligibility criteria for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal over time;
- unresolved issues with the application of those criteria; and
- how any future claims for this award should be administered.

The Tribunal is to determine its own procedures, in accordance with the general principles of procedural fairness, when conducting its inquiry as set out in these

Terms of Reference.

The Tribunal is to report, in writing, to the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence on the findings and recommendations that arise from the Inquiry.

In making its findings and formulating its recommendations the Tribunal is required to maintain the integrity of the Australian honours and awards system and identify any consequential impact that any finding or recommendation may have on that system.

Submissions to the Tribunal close on Friday 31 May 2013.

...and the following response has been sent...

The **Association** considered comments and motions, involving the Committee, and has proceeded with the following submission to the tribunal based on criteria of discrepancies involving a number the Detachment's members –





Submission to the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal

Re: Inquiry into Eligibility for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Introduction:

This submission is made by 131 Locators Association Inc. (131LAI). 131 LAI is an organisation formed for the purpose, inter alia, to establish a central forum for former Members of 131 Divisional Locating Battery to establish and maintain ongoing contact

to provide a communication point for former serving 131 Battery soldiers which includes newsletters and a website to establish a verbal, visual and written history of 131 Battery activities, with particular attention to its role in 1 Australian Task Force, South Vietnam.

This submission is made on behalf of our membership. For more information on the Association see: www.131locators.org.au

Eligibility:

The original eligibility criterion was 181 days minimum service in South Vietnam. Some exceptions were made to this timing criterion based upon the return to Australia of battle casualties and soldiers killed in action. Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery had one soldier KIA and another who died as a result of a vehicle accident in South Vietnam. The Battery also had a number of soldiers wounded in action.

Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery

Many of our members who served with Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery are eligible to wear the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal following service in South Vietnam for the required duration.

Some did not satisfy the 181 days time in country criterion. Within Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery this comprises approximately 6.5% of the total complement.

Others, principally National Servicemen, were returned to Australia due to the expiration of their National Service commitment.

The final group comprises those returned to Australia due to the cessation of the war in South Vietnam.

Consequently, within the Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery group of some 463 soldiers who served in South Vietnam, some fitted into each of the above four categories.

Therefore, the Association, on behalf of the membership has a responsibility to provide its recommendations to the Inquiry.

Recommendations:

The Association's recommendations to the Inquiry are in three parts.

Those Servicemen who served more than thirty-one days in the South Vietnam War Zone should be eligible for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Those National Servicemen who served in South Vietnam and who returned to Australia in order to complete their National Service commitment should be eligible for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Those Servicemen who served in South Vietnam and returned to Australia due to the cessation of the war in South Vietnam should be eligible for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Submitted for consideration by the Inquiry.

Prepared by Allen Morley,
President 131 Locators Association Inc May 2013

. web Performance...

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 in etc then get in touch with **Bob Billiards** and/or **Grahame Dignam**.

. Birthdays in the Battery...June –

Now let's pick the youngster out for the Month – **Geoff Pullar** - Happy 61st where ever you are?



Here's what **Ged Carroll** looked like some 47 years ago – relaxing with his mates. Not a bad head of hair either!

June	Name	Regt No	YOB	In SVN	Out SVN	Comments
1	GEOFFREY SULLIVAN	3798292	1949	02 12 1970	03 05 1971	131
	" "			03 05 1971	20 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
3	ALLAN MACLEAN Capt.	32203	1928	24 05 1967	28 06 1967	RAEME
5	PETER DEALY	3411983	1947	18 02 1968	21 02 1969	
5	JAMES LOCKHART	6709144	1947	03 06 1969	21 02 1970	
5	VITO CICCOLELLA	2791669	1947	16 12 1969	17 12 1970	
6	JOHN I'ANSON	2787424	1945	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	
7	BRUCE IRVINE	2783695	1945	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
8	EDWIN FIELD Sgt.	242577	1934	22 04 1966	31 07 1966	† 20.07.96
10	KEITH WHITE	2783029	1945	17 04 1967	13 12 1967	AACC
12	IAN AMOS	2785676	1945	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
12	LAWRENCE SAWYER	3787393	1945	04 05 1966	03 03 1967	
14	PAUL BUSS	2781443	1945	22 04 1966	28 04 1967	† 28.09.11
15	KARL DOEHRMANN Sgt.	38119	1933	{20 05 1966	29 04 1967	† 10.08.09
	" "			{28 01 1970	27 08 1970	
15	EDWARD WEBB	29964	1941	27 01 1970	21 01 1971	
16	RALPH PEARCE	214806	1945	22 04 1966	30 04 1967	† Unknown
18	ROGER WHITTAKER	2184592	1949	19 08 1970	05 08 1971	† Unknown
20	JOHN CHILTON	215855	1946	09 12 1968	03 12 1969	
23	WILLIAM PRENTER WO1	64258	1933	22 04 1966	07 06 1967	† RAEME 01.10.97
23	GEOFFREY PULLAR	1735623	1949	20 08 1970	20 08 1970	131
	" "			20 08 1970	09 06 1971	4 Fd Regt
25	PAUL BUTCHER	3411454	1946	01 04 1969	25 03 1970	
26	LINDSAY MEAD	3790714	1945	27 03 1968	26 04 1968	
26	GERRY CARROLL	2781311	1945	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
28	BARRY COLLINS	2793213	1948	20 08 1970	20 08 1970	131
	" "			20 08 1970	07 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
	" "			08 03 1971	09 06 1971	12 Fd Regt.

Ed – 9 blokes is ONLY one better off compared to last year! We don't want any next year!!!.

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received **108** and we've sent out **108**. **Ed** – we need 4 more for July!

Rieny Niewenhoff sent his in –

"Hi Paul,

After reading John's (Jaggard) Profile it is so great to hear from those who were in 131 at the SAME TIME as me. I remember John and others in that photo Jorge Kiene (don't know where he is.. last known place was Olinda Primary school Principal), Peter Barry (last known address was in Gosford NSW), Kevin Markwick (whereabouts unknown, but we are still looking) and Tonto (sorry can't help with that one). We will ferret these guys out gradually. **I hope you can get the profiles of newly located guys ... Ian Campbell, Barry Fountain and Rod Beasley.....** you should have their contact details via Grahame. Ron Mason I see is also working on locating Locators, here in Vic. Rieny"

. 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.

Grahame Dignam sent me the following – “PD, Graham Williams (who I am in regular contact with) came down to Coffs after Anzac Day in Bris. He mentioned that he had found some names in those B&W photos I sent to you some time ago (more to come on that). He also mentioned that he was travelling to WA and wanted some contact details to look up some guys there and look up Ollie. At Coffs, I addressed the gathering mentioning the Locate the Locator thing we are doing and got some good feedback which I am pursuing.

On my return I started the homework and came up with Ollie's' name in Mildura via White pages online, so I gave him a call and we had a good chat and I explained my role and what we were doing with E&E and the Website. I passed on application forms and the web link for him to have a geez at.(I am waiting for a response). Ollie also passed on details for **Peter McGann** (08 9456 1708) in Canning Vale WA and **Eric Williams** (07 4696 9940) Toowoomba Qld..

On my homework, I have yet to receive email addresses from Graham for **Jeff Schafer, Barry Smythe and Don Chalmers (do you have any of these?)**

I have also re-done a complete alpha list of vets and email contacts numbering 580 entries (some appear to be 12 Fld Rgt types). Not all names have email or contact details yet but I'm using that as a base to work from.”

LATE EXTRA – Geoff Jebb has caught up with the 21st Century and become “wired” onto the internet – thanks to the unrelenting help from **Bert Blink** (could get a mention on Australia Day Honours!). Seriously, though – WELCOME Geoff!

Vale –

Murtagh, Brian Neil Lt Col (Ret) – 335055 SVN 25.03.68 – 11.03.69 DOB 13.05.33 DOD 25.05.13

It is with respect that we include this warrior as he was Mentioned in Despatches in September, 1969 when he was a Major with 12th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. His linking, for most of us, to the Detachment comes about as he was mentioned in articles in *Eyes & Ears* in September 2009 and again in August 2011 written By Geoff Blackwell in relation to FSB Anderson during Operation Coral.

May he 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.

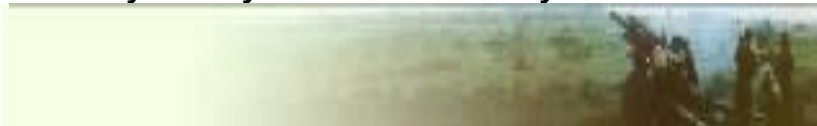
So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the Eyes & Ears regularly you could bite the bullet and email **Grahame Dignam**: Sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join.

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](http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/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 – **Annual General Meeting** 14 July 2013 - Paddington RSL commencing at 11.15am

Further details will be advised in the next issue of the *Associations Newsletter* LOCREP
<http://www.locatingartillery.org/index.htm>



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

www.artilleryhistory.org



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



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

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...

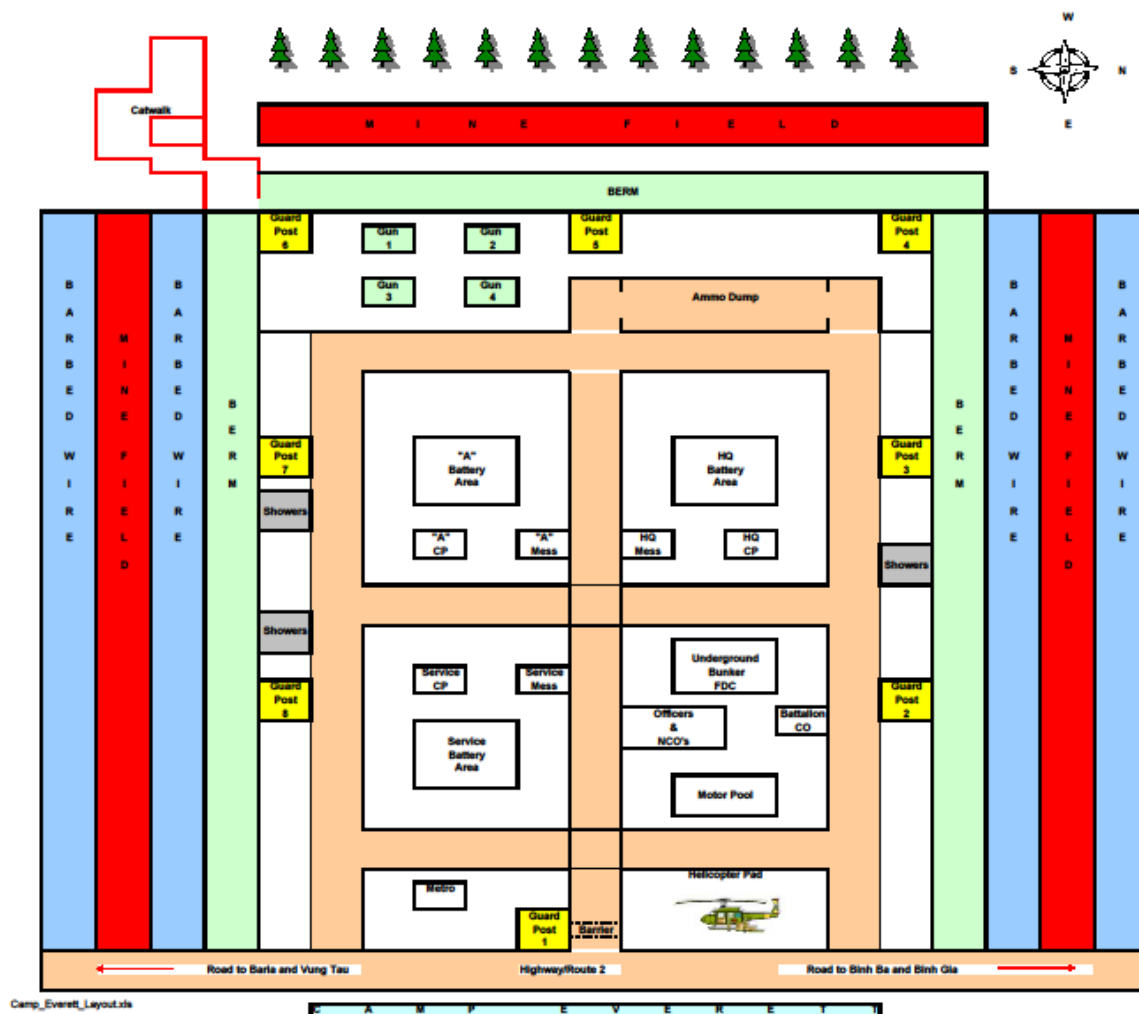


Dedicated to the men of the 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery who served in Vietnam from 1966-1971. We left Fort Sill in October 1966 for Vietnam. We originally were at Bear Cat, Nui Dat and Xuan Loc. We later were in many other locations in Vietnam. We also welcome our Australian and New Zealand Allies to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

. **Bill Taggart** sent the following out to get responses from the 1/83rd Crew and I thought it might interest a wider audience so have included it – who knows we might get some feedback for Bill - "As I mentioned, I created a draft of

the Camp Everett layout at Nui Dat. This is done from my memory so it obviously needs more eyes to get it right. I am attaching it here and am asking all of you who were at Nui Dat to tell me what you see wrong or missing. Also look for anything I positioned incorrectly. I have added it "as is" to the website but will make necessary changes as you send them in.
Thanks, Bill"



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

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