

THE EYES and EARS

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



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

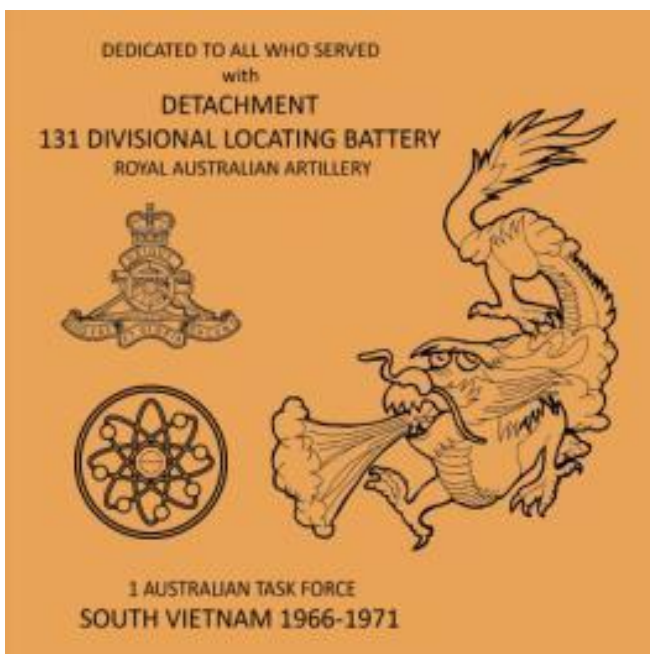
ABN 92 663 816 973

Supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs

. Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk – Seymour, Victoria.

The following is a facsimile of what the Locators Association's paver will look like and the smaller facsimiles represent what individual pavers will look like.

Dragon logo




1234567 Locator AA
Det 131 Div Loc Bty RAA SVN
1967-68


1234568 Locator BB
Det 131 Div Loc Bty RAA SVN
1966


1234569 Locator CC
131 Div Loc Bty RAA
1965 -85


1234570 Locator DD
Det 131 Div Loc Bty RAA SVN
1970

The Association' Paver was designed by **Nick Proskurin** and the following is a an email from the Seymour group confirming the activity –

"Your Association has arranged for a paver to be installed in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Walk in Seymour and it will be in place in April 2014.

We have arranged with the curators to have personal pavers from EX 131 Locators (all are eligible - No SVN criterea applies) to have your selected paver (arranged by you at your cost - see the link under "Sponsorship" -

<http://www.vietnamvetswalk.org.au/index.php/sponsorship>

placed in the near vicinity to the Association paver" – see the facsimile as above.

If you wish to have an individual paver manufactured and laid close to the Association paver you will need to go to this link above and follow the instructions after clicking the "Sponsorship" button. It is suggested that you act fairly promptly as it could ensure that your paver is placed in the 131 area.

N.B Make sure you stipulate the fact that you want the Battery "Dragon" incorporated in your paver.

. 22nd April, 1966 – the **Advance Party of the Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery** departed Australia for South Vietnam – 48 years ago this month.

. AN/KPQ-1 RADAR South Vietnam

Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery South Vietnam 1966 - 1970

This document records a brief history of the mortar locating radars used by Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery in South Vietnam...the reproduction of which has been granted by its author –

Keith R Ayliffe BEM

Ex 131 Div Loc Bty

This series has been temporarily put on hold till we finish the following series "1st AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE" WHICH FOLLOWS...

. 1st Australian Task Force – (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>) The following is the continuation of the account of Australian involvement in the South Vietnam conflict focusing on The Battle of Long Tan...

A Company and 3 Troop fight through]

By 18:45, D Company had succeeded in moving into an all round defensive position, nearly two and a half hours after the battle began. With the Australians concentrated they threw back a heavy attack from the south-east, and then further thrusts from the east, north-east and south in close succession. Yet with D Company unable to manoeuvre the initiative lay with the Viet Cong, and the massed artillery of 1 ATF was required to keep them at bay, with the main role of the infantry increasingly becoming one of protecting their forward observer. Indeed Stanley's efforts remained crucial to the continued survival of D Company and with the platoons now co-located his job became easier. He was able to observe their positions for himself, rather than relying on the reports of the infantry, and he subsequently brought the fire in to within 25 to 30 metres (82 to 98 ft) of the forward positions. At least one round landed within the D Company perimeter, wounding one of the defenders; regardless, the close fire continued to devastate the Viet Cong ranks. Despite the firepower available to support it, D Company was still heavily outnumbered, and as they awaited another assault their destruction seemed imminent. The fate of the battle now rested on whether the Australians were strong enough to repel the Viet Cong soldiers that succeeded in penetrating the barrage until a relief force arrived. A simultaneous assault from multiple directions threatened to divide the artillery and might allow a strong thrust to overrun the Australian position. A fresh force was then observed moving to the west, likely in an attempt to encircle and cut-off D Company.



M-113 APC similar to those at Long Tan.

Meanwhile, the progress of the relief force had been slowed by a number of factors including flooding from the heavy rain, Viet Cong action, poor equipment, limited communications and an ambiguous command relationship between the armour and infantry. Although normally having a strength of 13 APCs, 3 Troop had been reduced to just seven on 18 August, with the remainder undergoing maintenance, while many of those available suffered from mechanical problems and obsolete radios. As a consequence they were joined by three vehicles from 2 Troop to make up the numbers, although these lacked gun shields, leaving the crew commander exposed. Mounted in the carriers, 100 men from A Company 6 RAR departed Nui Dat under the command of Mollison, with orders to relieve the pressure on D Company by attacking from the south and then to reinforce them and secure the area to allow the evacuation of the wounded. However, with there being relatively few gaps in the Nui Dat perimeter wide enough for the APCs, Roberts was forced to take a circuitous route south-east through the base. On arrival he found the exit had been moved due to road works being carried out by the engineers, and this resulted in further delay until an alternative could be located.

At 17:55, after finally clearing the barbed wire, Roberts was ordered to send two carriers back for Townsend and to wait until he came up, as he intended to accompany the carriers rather than move by helicopter. Detaching two carriers, Roberts ignored the second part of the order and the remainder of the troop proceeded, leaving Nui Dat at 18:00.

As the rain began Roberts moved along the edge of the rubber plantation north-east of Long Phuoc in column, descending to the Suoi Da Bang which was now heavily swollen. The terracing of the paddy fields along the creek resulted in a steep drop to the water and a difficult climb out; however, using a bullock track alongside an agricultural dam which he had previously utilised during Operation Hardihood in May, Roberts began to swim the carriers across the creek despite the fast moving current which threatened to wash them downstream. At 18:10 Roberts was ordered for a second time to halt and wait for Townsend. Yet he had continued to monitor D Company's situation over the radio and again chose to disregard the order. Mollison concurred, agreeing not to halt and wait for Townsend to catch up, and they proceeded to cross the creek. After completing the dangerous crossing without incident, Roberts left one carrier and its infantry to secure it and to act as a guide for Townsend, while the remaining seven APCs continued to move towards the battle. Advancing another 1 kilometre (0.62 mi), the relief force reached the junction of Route 52 and the north-west running road through the rubber plantation by 18:20. The road led directly to the scene of the fighting, and using it as his centre axis, Roberts deployed one section of three APCs on the right under the command of Sergeant Ron Richards and one on the left under Sergeant Leslie O'Reilly, each with two vehicles forward and one back evenly spaced 40 metres (44 yd) apart, while he remained in the centre moving astride the road. At 18:22 the formation began to advance on a 300-metre (330 yd) frontage, only to again be ordered by radio to halt and wait for Townsend. With sunset due at 19:11 and darkness already beginning to fall due to the heavy rain clouds overhead, Roberts once more decided to press on.

The relief force moved into the plantation in open formation, unaware of the location of D Company or the Viet Cong. With visibility limited by the low vegetation of the young rubber trees and the heavy rain, they suddenly encountered a company moving west in arrowhead dressed in greens, cloth hats and webbing. Initially uncertain of the identity of the men, the Australians briefly paused. Realising they were Viet Cong attempting to outflank D Company to attack it from the rear, Lieutenant Peter Dinham—commander 2 Platoon travelling in the right-hand APC—ordered the crew commander to engage and they were soon joined by the remainder of the troop. The rain had masked their approach and the Viet Cong—later identified as the weapons company from D445 Battalion—were caught by surprise as the cavalry crashed into their flank. Recovering rapidly though, they returned a heavy volume of machine-gun fire, covering their casualties as they were dragged to the rear. Meanwhile, the platoon sergeant had been travelling on top of the overcrowded carrier and was forced to jump clear to avoid being hit. Dinham ordered the rear door open and the section disembarked to protect him. They were soon joined by the remainder of the platoon. Moving into assault formation 2 Platoon advanced, engaging the Viet Cong and causing heavy casualties. The spontaneous assault caught them by surprise, adding to their growing disorder. However, as the fighting continued it further delayed the advance of the relief force, and with Roberts concerned the presence of the infantry forward of his vehicles would prevent the APCs from employing their heavy weapons, he called to Mollison to order them to return to the carriers. After re-embarking the infantry 3 Troop resumed the advance, breaking into the Viet Cong force as it streamed west, firing their 50 calibre machine-guns, while the infantry engaged with small arms from the open hatches. D445 Battalion was subsequently routed and forced to withdraw east having lost an estimated 40 killed, while one Australian was wounded.

3 Troop continued forward in assault formation, moving deeper into the plantation. As they did so the young rubber gave way to more mature trees of approximately 10 metres (33 ft) high, improving visibility and allowing them to increase their speed. Meanwhile, by 18:30 B Company was also drawing near on foot, and they observed the Viet Cong moving around the western flank, likely in an attempt to escape the APCs. Shortly after they were accidentally engaged by the cavalry themselves and suffered one man wounded. After moving a further 200 metres (220 yd) the relief force came out of the tree-line where they were confronted by groups of eight to ten Viet Cong moving east, in total about 100 men. Believed to be the lead elements of the force that had just been struck, after abandoning its attempt to outflank D Company it was now withdrawing in the opposite direction. The APC crews opened fire, engaging their flank with their heavy machine-guns. A number were hit while others turned to engage the cavalry as it closed with them. A 57 mm RCL then engaged one of the APCs at close range with the round narrowly missing and blowing apart a tree which fell across the vehicle. The crew commander, Corporal John Carter, engaged the anti-armour team from the top of the APC as they reloaded, yet his .50 calibre machine-gun jammed just as they fired again and he killed two of them with his Owen gun from just 15 to 20 metres (16 to 22 yd). The second RCL round subsequently detonated against the fallen tree, saving both the vehicle and its occupants. Despite being dazed Carter killed three more Viet Cong soldiers as he scrambled back into the carrier which was now without communications following the destruction of its aerial. By drawing further fire he allowed the remainder of the troop to advance, and for his actions was later awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM).

The possible presence of a second RCL team sited in mutual support forced the Australians to halt once again. Concerned about the consequences of bypassing an anti-armour weapon only to be engaged from the rear, Roberts ordered the troop to scan the area. Frustrated by the delay, Mollison demanded Roberts continue the advance, and an argument broke out between the two. However, as the commander of the APCs Roberts ignored Mollison despite his more senior rank, refusing to continue until he either located the weapon or was confident the threat did not exist. Finally, following a five-minute delay the Australians moved off again after no weapon was located. A machine-gun then engaged three of the APCs in the left hand section, none of which had gun shields. One of the crew commanders was fatally wounded and the vehicle forced to a halt, but not before the Viet Cong machine-gunner was crushed to

death by the driver. The troop sergeant ran between the carriers under heavy fire to take command of the vehicle after Roberts ordered him to return to Nui Dat due to the mistaken belief a number of the infantry on board had also been wounded. Despite Mollison's objections the vehicle departed, taking the headquarters of one of the infantry platoons with it. Still uncertain of the location of D Company, Roberts was forced to closely control the fire of the troop due to the concern any survivors might be hit by overshoots from the armoured vehicle's heavy machine-guns. At the same time the infantry continued to engage from the rear of the vehicles. A further 45 Viet Cong were estimated to have been killed during this action.

Relief of D Company

Unaware of the hold up on the left flank, the right hand section of APCs continued to advance. Pressing on, the section crossed a small track and moved through the artillery fire which had been called in by Smith on D445 Battalion as it had attempted to outflank D Company. As they moved closer to D Company the carriers were engaged by small arms and RPGs, one of which exploded near the tracks of one of the advancing carriers, albeit without doing any damage. The three carriers soon located D Company and continued forward firing in support of the beleaguered defenders. On seeing the carriers approaching through the trees many of the survivors from D Company stood and cheered. Yet after realising his section was on its own Richards decided to disembark 2 Platoon before looping back through the artillery fire to rejoin the troop. Meanwhile, after completing the final stretch of the advance on foot Dinham moved his platoon to a position on D Company's eastern flank and started to dig-in, awaiting the arrival of the remainder of A Company. To the west Roberts and the three remaining carriers of 3 Troop had resumed the advance and linked up with Richards at a junction in the road 300 metres (330 yd) south-west of D Company. Townsend arrived with elements of his headquarters aboard three more carriers at 18:50. Following a number of uncoordinated manoeuvres by the APCs, Townsend took command and with the light failing, he ordered Roberts to assault from the west into the flank of the main Viet Cong force.

Bolstered to nine M113s, 3 Troop again moved forward through the artillery fire with Roberts spreading the additional APCs across the rear of his formation to afford depth. Utilising a track as a guide he reformed the troop into a wide assault formation. Beginning the advance at 18:55, 3 Troop prepared for a frontal assault on the Viet Cong force. Arriving at the rubber tapper's hut, Roberts change direction to the north. Linking up with D Company, the APCs moved through the company position. Continuing past D Company to their left, the relief force moved forward rapidly, firing their machine-guns. A brief but heavy engagement occurred, with the Viet Cong responding with automatic fire, including tracer and explosive rounds, which enveloped 3 Troop from their front and left, but was mostly high. Arriving at a crucial point in the fighting, the relief force turned the tide of the battle. The Viet Cong had been massing for another assault which would likely have destroyed D Company, yet the additional firepower and mobility of the armoured force broke their will to fight, forcing them to break contact and begin to withdraw as night approached. At 19:00 the 32 men from B Company finally entered the D Company position, even as the Australian cavalry continued to assault the Viet Cong. After a long and difficult approach under mortar fire and the threat of ambush by a superior force Smith placed Ford on the western side of the D Company defensive position to act as a screen to allow them to treat their wounded and prepare to resist a counter-attack.

3 Troop swept forward with the APCs continuing to assault a further 500 metres (550 yd) before Townsend ordered their return. Turning north-west, Roberts moved back to the company location at 19:10. Yet even as they did so the Viet Cong continued to attack from the north-east, although this too was soon broken off. Around the perimeter the Australians engaged the withdrawing Viet Cong with their rifles and machine-guns, while the APCs moved into a line from north to south on the eastern side of the company position. A Company disembarked and took up firing positions between the vehicles, joining 2 Platoon. The artillery had been almost constant throughout the battle and had prevented D Company from being destroyed. By 19:15 the firing had ceased and as darkness fell the Australians prepared for the Viet Cong to mount another attack. Although snipers continued to engage the Australians there were no further assaults and the battle came to a conclusion. The APCs subsequently formed a hollow square around D Company. With the Viet Cong at least temporarily driven off, the Australian position was now more strongly held and additional ammunition had been brought in by the APCs, but it was now dark and they would be unable to receive further reinforcement, while the ability of the Viet Cong to mount a night attack was unknown. Meanwhile, the expenditure of artillery ammunition had been high and an urgent demand for 1,000 rounds was submitted by 1st Field Regiment, RAA at 19:30 in case the fighting continued. However, with arrangements for the emergency aerial resupply of Nui Dat by night still being worked out, and with a road resupply by 1 ALSG in danger of being ambushed, it took several hours for the rounds to be loaded and delivered by US Army CH-47 Chinook from Vung Tau.

Townsend assumed command of the position as the Australians regrouped, while Kirby co-ordinated the collection of the dead and wounded. At 20:50 Townsend radioed Jackson, reporting that one his platoons had been destroyed and that D Company was "non-effective", with five dead, 16 wounded and 16 men still missing. Viet Cong losses were believed to have been heavy; however, with no confirmed casualty figures it was beginning to look to the Australians like they had suffered a major defeat. The two officers agreed it would be impossible to secure the battlefield or to attempt to locate the missing from 11 Platoon in the darkness, and after it became clear the Viet Cong were not going to counter-attack, Townsend ordered a withdrawal to a position 750 metres (820 yd) to the west from where their casualties could be evacuated. Handling the dead and wounded proved a slow process but with the casualties finally loaded onto the carriers D Company left at 22:45, while B and A Companies departed on foot 45 minutes later. Roberts established a landing zone by forming a square and illuminated it with the interior lights of the APCs by opening their top hatches. The artillery ceased as the evacuation commenced with the first casualties being taken out by a US Army Dustoff helicopter, while the remainder were extracted by six UH-1B Iroquois from No. 9 Squadron RAAF. Despite being slowed by the requirement for the helicopters to land without lights, the operation went smoothly

and was finally completed after midnight. The last of the casualties were taken out by 00:34, and they were flown to the Australian hospital at Vung Tau.

During the night the artillery continued to fire on likely Viet Cong forming-up points, although 11 Platoon's final position was avoided for fear of hitting any survivors. Meanwhile, US aircraft bombed targets on likely withdrawal routes to the east. Forming a defensive position ready to repulse an expected attack the Australians remained overnight, enduring the cold and the heavy rain. Although they were now in a better position to hold off any subsequent attack, further reinforcement from 1 ATF at night would be a difficult proposition and was unlikely. Yet with the Viet Cong spent no further attack was mounted. Smith and Townsend spent the night in the back of one of the carriers planning the clearance of the battlefield and the follow-up of the Viet Cong, which was scheduled for the following day under the codename Operation Smithfield. Jackson stipulated the force was to remain within artillery range, but would otherwise have freedom of action to complete the exploitation over the next two to three days. Townsend requested the remaining APCs bring out 6 RAR headquarters, C Company and a section of mortars the following morning, while D Company, 5 RAR would also be placed under his command for the operation. However, with a company from 5 RAR still in Binh Ba, the bulk of 1 ATF's remaining combat power would be deployed as part of the clearance, leaving just two infantry companies from 5 RAR to defend Nui Dat. Smith was determined to recover the missing from 11 Platoon and despite its losses D Company would lead the assault.

We continue with "Clearing the battlefield, 19–21 August 1966..." next month

. April in SVN...

7 April	1967	Major P.J. Badcoe, VC	Major P.J. Badcoe, Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, originally from Adelaide, SA, was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously for a series of actions in South Vietnam between February and April 1967
9 April	1968	HMAS Sydney arrived at Vung Tau	The 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, disembarked and the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, embarked. Sydney made 24 voyages to Vietnam during the war.
11 April	1970	HMAS Vendetta returns to Sydney	HMAS Vendetta was the only one of three Australian Daring class destroyers to serve on the gunline in Vietnamese waters. The ship served one tour.
29 April	1965	Prime Minister Menzies announces the commitment of an infantry battalion to Vietnam	Australia's involvement in Vietnam was a gradual process. By April 1965 there were 100 members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in Vietnam. The commitment of a battalion represented a major step in Australia's involvement and precipitated further increases in the number of Australians serving in Vietnam until reductions began in 1970.

. The late Fred Lennon.....collection series...



Radar set with sandbag wall. Big hill in the back is where the VC shelled from. It is about 2.5 miles away.

Ed – crikey! It looks a trifle exposed! They really had it in for the Radar mob.

. **Chris Bouilly** sent in an email which had the subject line -

“MEMORIES OF ANOTHER PLACE - ANOTHER TIME *”

which was followed up by **Grahame Dignam** sending it as well with an attached photo. His email went like this – “pd, Trawling thru the link given to us by Chris Bouilly was this pic of J Menz. T Bruce and P Furhmann:”



Ed – this got me to do a “trawl” as well and I came up with two others from the same site – below



The photo on the left is, **Ed** thinks, **Ian Yerbury** talking to **Bruce Irvine**, don't know the bloke on the telurometer, but that is **Greg Green** on the right writing his diary! Correct me if I'm wrong and give me the only bloke working's name?



Then there's **Peter Hopper** operating an MRA3 somewhere?

These photos and heaps more (not necessarily of the Det) can be viewed using this link -

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=christmas+at+nu+i+dat&biw=1024&bih=483&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=SNSZUpuvM86HiQeVqoHICA&ved=0CC8QsAQ#imgdii=_

. ANZAC Day 2014...

Terry Erbs got this into us – “Hi Paul,

I'll be in Melbourne for Anzac Day this year but John Bristow and Phil Sheedy are planning to march in Brisbane behind 131 Bty banner, which is in the safe custody of the BSM 131 Bty. I have been in touch with Sean Voss RSM 20th STA Regiment and they are planning to march behind the new LSTAA banner this year. Will forward confirmation details when available. Cheers Terry”

Coffs Harbour - Allan Harrison (a lucky new resident) gives us the lowdown – “Thanks Paul.

You asked for ANZAC Day arrangements in an earlier email.

I am a resident of Coffs Harbour these days and attended the monthly meeting of the RSL Sub Branch this morning, where ANZAC Day arrangements were promulgated as follows:

0520 Form up outside Coffs Ex Services Club (C Ex) for 50 metre march to Cenotaph

0530 Dawn Service

0600 Gunfire Breakfast at C Ex

0830 Form up in Park Ave for March to Cenotaph

0930 Cenotaph Service

1200 ANZAC Day lunch at C Ex with comedian Marty Fields

1400 Two up commences in Vista Lounge at C Ex

1700 Flag lowering ceremony at Cenotaph

Cheers Allan Harrison”

Reminder from last month's Eyes & Ears...

WHAT'S HAPPENING as reported earlier...

Sydney – Line up for the march will be at 10am, at the corner of Hunter and Pitt Streets. We are closer to the front each year. Lunch will be at Zest restaurant at City Tattersalls Club in Pitt St commencing at 12.30pm

Geelong – Rieny Nieuwenhof was first cab off the rank with what the go will be in Geelong –

5.30am - Pre-Dawn service Point Danger, Torquay.

9.00am - ANZAC service Queenscliff - The Fort. Memorial Service Boer War Memorial and Memorial Service for Korean Veterans (other services around the Geelong and District)

9.30am - ANZAC Service Geelong RSL

10.00am - Service at Geelong Peace Memorial (Vietnam Veterans)

10.30am - ANZAC Street March and Service in Johnstone Park, Geelong

1.00pm - Lunch for Vietnam Veterans at the Vietnam Veterans Centre, North Geelong

Traditional ANZAC Football Match St.Joseph's vs South Barwon, with presentation of Vietnam Medals.

Caloundra be warned!! – **Barry Guzder** sent the following in – Let's hope they catch up with some of the blokes up there – “Hi Dicko ! Digs might have told you but some of us (Blackwell, Blink, Digs, Guzders and Billiards) are meeting on the 25th at Rick Marques's place to celebrate the holy day. Probably all march at Caloundra. Regards Barry G.”

Peter Pioro got in touch with the following – “Paul, Harold Little and I are members of Woonona-Bulli Sub-Branch. As I shall be in hospital from 17th March for 2 spinal surgical procedures am not sure if I will be on my feet however I will hopefully attend the ANZAC day events and will attempt to get some photos for you.

Regards, Peter Pioro”

Ed – Let's hope that Peter makes a great recovery and can take some part on April 25!

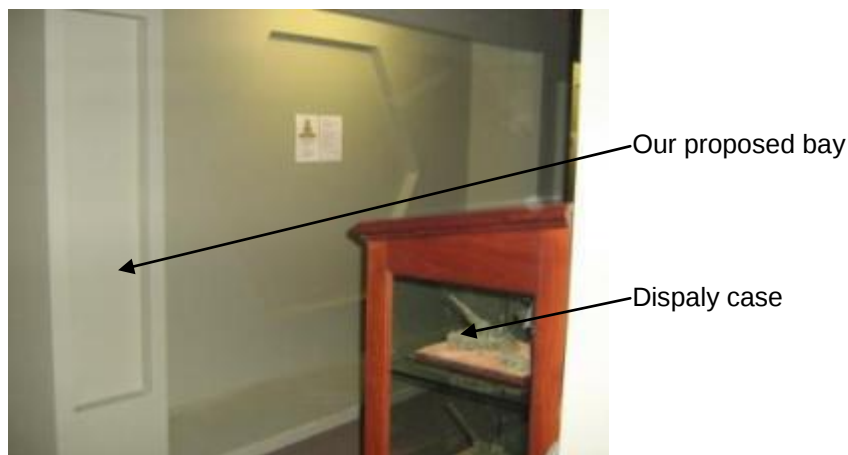
Keith Dean got his march organised – “Hi Paul, I will be marching in Sydney this year. Thanks Keith Dean”

Plus keep a watch on the Association web site for more up to date information under “Events” / “News” etc.

. Bert Blink has undertaken a very rewarding project on behalf of the Association involving the **Philip Island National Vietnam Veterans Museum in Victoria.**

Bert's email contained the following - "In November last year the Association thought an ongoing project might be the "Ubique Project" which would try to ensure that Det 131 Div Loc Battery (and its successors) is represented everywhere the Vietnam War (in our case) and Artillery units are commemorated. And to this end the Association made an approach to Andrew Kilsby at the Phillip Island National Vietnam Veterans Museum, seeking to obtain space where Detachment 131 Div Loc Battery might have a display to make visitors to the museum aware of our part in the Vietnam War. This approach was warmly welcomed by Andrew who outlined a number of things we needed to do and a number of these are already in train.

However, Andrew is seeking small artefacts along with personal stories that can be displayed near our 131 Panel. Hence we would like each of you to look through all your personal Vietnam memorabilia and decide if you would like to make a donation of these items, along with a few words describing what they mean to you, as far as your memories of those times in SVN. Surely we have one or two Surveyors who managed to buy one of those Curta calculators from the Army when they were disposed of many years back. Some photos have been provided by Andrew to give you some idea of what our bay will look like and its adjacent display case are shown below."



...**Andrew Kilsby** responded to Bert with – "Hi Bert,

Here's the images of the RAA bay you requested (above photo)...as you can see, it's a blank slate.

I'd like to suggest we give 131 DLB the top left quadrant outside the diamond for its space, and I will set up the digital picture frame in the recessed narrow column to its immediate left (see the photo above). You will also see the corner of a facing display cabinet with a SP gun model showing. This cabinet is reserved for RAA artifacts (the model and others are temporary only), and this is where any smaller items can be placed safely behind glass in the locked cabinet.

Your plaque (Bert sent his 131DLB plaque for inclusion in the cabinet) safely received thank you, and I suggest that this could be one item placed inside that cabinet with any small objects from 131 – I'd prefer this than to have it on the wall but I can incorporate the battery logo into the top of the panel. Hope all that makes sense to you.

My production guy/graphic designer will be coming in this week to measure up the space and I can then get the panel design done and back to you for checking and agreement.

I'll keep you informed of progress.

Thanks, Andrew"

So if anyone has items that he would like to have included in the cabinet please get in touch with **Ed**, initially, and I'll pass the information in the first place.

We'll keep you posted on this project as it will well worth having a look at when it's completed.

. **Peter Ravelje** sent in the following photo which doesn't need any description –

Dumpster at the 'Dat'



This photo raises a couple of questions

1. **Where are their weapons!!**

2. **Is this exercise being done to "Wah,two,three pool!"**

. **Kim McGrath** sent in an email the following is a part thereof – “Hi Paul,...

On another matter – The National Gunner Dinner Sat 23 Aug 14 is growing steadily and we now have about 360 registered attendees and they continue to come out of left field. The range of people registering is very interesting and also very encouraging for the purpose of fostering Esprit De Corps. There are still a lot of Locators that are yet to register but we don't close the books until the end of May so there is still quite a time to go. A Bty Association has a large group booking and we even have about ten (10) personnel attending from the Kiwi Artillery. It's going to be a great event.

Ubique, Kim”

AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

2014 NATIONAL GUNNER DINNER

When: Saturday, 23 August 2014

Where: The Event Centre
20 Minchinton Street
CALOUNDRA QLD 4551

The Event: 3 Hour Dedicated Military Concert by the Sunshine Coast Symphony Orchestra
1:30 pm to 5:00pm

3 Course Dinner with 3 Hour Drinks Package followed by Port
Includes a Wind and String Quintet to provide light background dinner music
6:30 pm to 12:00 Midnight

Costs: \$145.00 per person

Bookings: Essential

Wives and Partners
Most Welcome

The Australian Artillery Association is proud to host this wonderful, entertaining and memorable event
A special event bringing Gunners of all eras together to share in this momentous occasion

This is a Once-in-a-Lifetime event for all Gunners to gather in one location and enjoy a First Class event

DON'T MISS OUT

(2 INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED EX RAA GUNNERS FROM THE USA AND SCOTLAND)

MINIMUM NUMBER: 400 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 950

For further information visit: www.australianartilleryassociation.com
or call Graham on 0411 141 580 or Kim on 0417 422 427

. **In Case** any of you who missed the following Media release from the Minister for Veterans' Affairs the following was received from a couple of sources – thanks fellas...



Media Release

Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC
Special Minister of State

Friday, 21 March 2014

VA018

PENSION INCREASE FOR VETERAN COMMUNITY

More than 272,000 veterans, their partners, war widows and widowers across Australia received a pension increase yesterday, announced the Minister for Veterans' Affairs Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson.

As pension rates are calculated on a daily basis, the next pension paid after the 20 March increase (on payday 3 April 2014) will be paid partly at the old rate and partly at the new rate. The first full payment at the new rates of pension will be payday 17 April 2014.

The table below highlights the key changes to fortnightly rates.

Pension	Old Rate , (per fortnight)	New Rate , (per fortnight)	Increase
Service Pension—single	\$827.10	\$842.80	\$15.70
Service Pension—couples	\$1,246.80 couple	\$1,270.60 couple	\$23.80
	\$623.40 each	\$635.30 each	\$11.90
War Widow(er)'s Pension	\$840.20	\$856.20	\$16.00
Income Support Supplement	\$247.60	\$252.40	\$4.80
Special Rate (TPI) of Disability Pension	\$1,269.00	\$1,293.20	\$24.20
Intermediate Rate of Disability Pension	\$861.30	\$877.80	\$16.50
Extreme Disablement Adjustment	\$700.70	\$714.20	\$13.50
100 per cent General Rate of Disability Pension	\$451.00	\$459.60	\$8.60

1 – These are the maximum rates of payment and include any clean energy supplement payable.

Pensions are indexed twice a year in March and September taking account of changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI) and Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE).

A full list of pension rates are available on www.dva.gov.au or by calling 133 254 or 1800 555 254 from regional Australia.

Media inquiries:
Department of Veterans' Affairs Media: 02 6289 6203

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) and Veterans Line can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046

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. **Enoggera** – Friday, 28th March “**131 Reunion**” – **Allen Morley and Grahame Dignam** went to the function and caught up with **Terry Erbs** and **Stan “Pablo” Briggs** from the SVN era along with a heap of other Locators.

The following are some of the photos –

The new banner unfurling in its new home – both Joe Kaplun and Allan Harrison were on hand...



...**Allen Morley** covers the visit by himself and **Graham Dignam** very succinctly in his -

Presidential perambulations...

Enoggera here we came ... four old 131ers versus all the 20STA Regiment and 131 Bty ‘newies’.

The reunion was a great opportunity to establish a link with the team at 20STA, learn what they had been doing, and swap some war whoppers. Terry Erbs (SVN 1968-1969), Grahame Dignam (67-68) and Allen Morley (67-68) represented the 131 Locators Association, then out from the shadows stepped Stan Briggs (67-68).

This group paid its respects at the James Menz Club, we being the only ones present who knew Jim personally.



Grahame, Stan and Terry at the club.

The beer flowed freely and we were welcomed and interrogated. The young soldiers could not believe that our correspondence was either by letter or very expensive and restricted telegrams. Sic transit Gloria. Grahame presented our last copy of Tracks of the Dragon to 131 Battery BSM Kym Fox for safe keeping. One interesting artefact in the Club was the two ANKPQ-1 sensor leaves shown below, particularly the one on the right peppered with bullet holes. Perhaps that is a souvenir from Fire Support Base Coral?

Here's the list of the Menz Club Presidents – the names seem to be painted on something familiar??



...and into the Club...



with **Terry Erbs** relaxing at the podium...



Rack your "Slouch" before you come in...helps dry out the sweat!

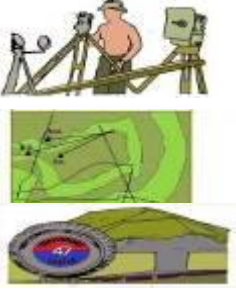
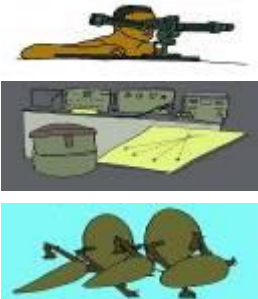


Then how about a meal in the OR's Mess (below) – a vast improvement from the Holsworthy days when the term "Mess" was more appropriate...



...then somewhere to “crash” for the night – now this is a very up to date “Nissen” hut!





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> - check the Events Calender to keep up with what's happening.

. Upcoming Events Calender –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Monday 26/05/2014 at 1100hrs

Venue: Cronulla RSL Memorial Club, Address: 38 Gerrale St, Cronulla NSW 2230 Phone:(02) 9523 6833 You're all welcome. **There will be NO meeting April due to ANZAC Day commitments.**

. 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.**

. Birthdays in the Battery...April –

Now let's pick the youngster out for the Month – **Mark Szypulski** - Happy 63rd where ever you are?



Here's what **Ron Mason** looked like some 48 years ago – when he was about 21!

April	Name	Regt No	YOB	In SVN	Out SVN	Comments
1	DES SPENCER	3787905	1945	03 01 1967	13 12 1967	
1	IAN MORRIS Capt.	243062	1941	10 03 1970	09 07 1970	RAEME
	" "			09 07 1970	11 03 1971	106 Fd Wkshp
2	HILTON HOLLOWAY	1736606	1949	16 12 1970	03 05 1971	131
	" "			03 05 1971	26 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
4	KEVIN MAKER	2251507	1949	26 08 1969	13 08 1970	
4	WILLIAM LAUGHLIN	2788465	1945	13 01 1969	27 08 1969	
7	JOHN McFADDEN	2783243	1945	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	
7	DAVID MARTIN	2781662	1945	22 04 1966	29 04 1967	
8	RICHARD BRISTOW	1733143	1945	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	
8	LEON DJATSCHENKO	312532	1949	26 08 1969	13 08 1970	
9	TERRENCE MYERS	217798	1950	08 05 1969	30 04 1970	
11	MICHAEL McDONNELL	2781377	1945	04 05 1966	11 04 1967	
11	TERRENCE FOX	1200934	1949	08 07 1968	02 07 1969	
12	KEVIN BEVANS	3798316	1949	10 02 1971	07 06 1971	131
	" "			07 06 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
15	Martins Van De Nieuwenhof	3798241	1947	10 02 1971	05 08 1971	
19	RON ROYAL WO2	23552	1929	02 03 1967	20 02 1968	† Unknown
19	PETER CLARKE	3792212	1947	11 11 1968	27 08 1969	
19	BARRY DYSON	3795956	1947	03 06 1970	04 03 1971	
20	ANTHONY TURNER	1202849	1946	27 01 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "			01 07 1971	15 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
21	JEFFREY BASSFORD	2792419	1949	29 04 1970	14 04 1971	
21	NEVILLE DAVIS	5716997	1949	11 02 1971	12 08 1971	
22	BARRY CAMPTON Capt.	61270	1937	{14 07 1963	22 07 1963	
	" "			{13 08 1966	28 04 1967	
22	MARK SZYPULSKI	313270	1951	19 08 1970	17 03 1971	4 & 12 Fd Regt.
	" "			18 03 1971	29 07 1971	131
23	MURRAY SMALE	5411587	1948	27 11 1967	20 08 1968	
24	JOHANNES LAS	3792338	1947	23 09 1968	18 06 1969	
25	KEVIN BANKS	3794366	1948	27 11 1969	04 06 1970	
25	QUENTON KNIGHT	2412578	1949	09 12 1968	24 09 1969	
26	GRAHAME DIGNAM	2784745	1946	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
26	WILLIAM CROWTHER	215416	1946	22 04 1966	02 11 1966	
27	GERALD YOUNG Maj.	311460	1926	{06 03 1967	04 04 1967	RAEME
	" "			{25 05 1967	22 06 1967	RAEME
28	GARY LOVELL	218160	1950	08 05 1969	30 04 1970	
29	RON MASON	3787154	1945	04 05 1966	03 03 1967	
29	KEVIN THORNTON	2781420	1945	04 05 1966	02 02 1967	
29	BERNARD ERICA	3787334	1945	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
29	PETER FUHRMANN	3789807	1946	21 06 1967	02 04 1968	
30	IAN McMILLAN	215117	1945	15 07 1970	09 09 1970	

Ed – 14 blokes not highlighted maybe this might prompt someone to find at least one Locator to reduce this number now!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 122 and we've sent out 122. Ed – c'mon there must be one guilty conscience out there??

. **Located...**

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

.Vale –

<u>Name</u>	<u>Regt No</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>In SVN</u>	<u>Out SVN</u>	<u>DOB</u>	<u>DOD</u>
Frost, Lesley David	215230	RSM	22.04.66	28.04.67	25.08.45	26.03.14



The photo at right is taken from Les's facebook page & here's the link - <https://www.facebook.com/les.frost.73>

The family and friends of Les are kindly invited to attend his Funeral Service to be held at The Penhall Memorial Chapel, 33 William Street, Orange on Wednesday April 2, 2014 commencing at 10.30am. Members of the National Servicemen, Vietnam Veterans Association and the RSL are respectfully invited to attend. (source – Central Western Daily – Saturday, 29th March, 2014)

Brian Turner sent this photo in of Les below –



– it shows the early days of Nui Dat

Brian Campbell has a memory to share – “I would like to say that Les “Frosty” Frost was the first, member of 131 to set foot on Vietnamese soil as I was following him from landing barge. That experience when “Frosty” and I were craned over the side of the HMAS Sydney and Capt Townley said “when you two get to shore cock your weapons and good luck” would have stuck in “Frosty’s” memory as is has in mine. We spent 5 or 6 hours in a paddock which later became the Vung Tau base for us not knowing what to do, who was the enemy or who was friend. A lot happened in that time we were together and it is very hard to put it in writing. I will miss you mate!

Regards, Brian Campbell”

Dave Crowther adds the following – “Hi Dicko, Sad news another “pioneer” down. Something for *Eyes and Ears* - I used “Frosty” as forward scout in all the morning clearing patrols and the “Pommy” Sgt from 103 Bty would always use him in that role whenever we did t.a.o.r. patrols. He was well trusted. I haven’t been to Orange since my stroke in Nov. 2011. “Frosty” had his garage set up as a museum and full of Vietnam memorabilia. I used to visit him whenever I was in Orange. He was a good bloke, also played union with him at North Head and Holsworthy. He was a laugh a minute. Someone may like to mention the B.C.’s landrover and the gun pit when “Frosty” was on piquet duty. If not, I will mention at a more appropriate time. We can all have a laugh then. Two attachments for you from Orange paper. He was well known in the central west for his services to the veteran community. Anyone who has attended a reunion at Coffs Harbour could never deny seeing him there (the newspaper images would be how they remember him.

Les (“Jose Jimanez”) , Rest In Peace. Kind regards D.C.”

Dave Crowther back again – “Hi Dicko, It’s me again. Just spoke to Don Simmons in the nursing home in Sydney. He has extreme difficulty hearing on the phone, even with his new expensive hearing aids. I asked did he want to put something in *Eyes and Ears* about Les. He is in not too good a state but said to pass on his condolences to Les’s family. Don was Section Sgt of Alpha Radar and Les was with us in SVN. Had to “over and out” until I see him in person. D.C.”

The Central Western Daily - the following extracts were taken from the Orange, NSW daily newspaper – the Central Western Daily, which show a passionate side to Les which **Ed** thought would be of interest to those who knew him and give others a glimpse of one of our **1966 Pioneers**, who arrived in SVN with the advance party...

– 24th April, 2006



"VIETNAM veteran Les Frost is proud of his role in Australia's history. His back shed contains an extensive collection of war memorabilia and he has a badge on his jacket to proclaim he was in the Australian Army in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967.

Not all of his fellow veterans feel the same way.

"A Vietnam veteran is a strange fellow. He won't own up and says he's a Vietnam vet because they got kicked in the butt and laughed at when they came back. It's just not right," he said.

Les believes the Australian public, who were largely opposed to the Vietnam War by the time Australian troops were withdrawn, took their anger out on returned servicemen.

He said this was the reason many veterans felt removed from Anzac Day ceremonies and traditional war memorials. "They redesigned the cenotaph and put the Vietnam deceased on it, but Vietnam veterans haven't got anywhere to go. There's nothing here – they don't have their own place," he said.

Les, who enlisted for Vietnam after serving with the Australian Army in Malaya, became a Regimental Sergeant-Major. He believes a memorial similar to the one for National Services in Newman Park would be appropriate.

However, he said Vietnam veterans in Orange need to stick together and fight for their own place to remember their experiences of war.

Despite his pride, tears come to Les's eyes when he talks about what it was like coming home from Vietnam.

"You don't want to come back and have people say you didn't fight in a real war. How come I left 500 of my mates over there?"

– 5th March, 2007



"NEWS that two soldiers killed in Vietnam in 1965 have been found and brought home has proven to be particularly poignant for local veteran Les Frost.

Four years ago, after visiting other Vietnam ex-servicemen in the US, Les asked about the bracelets that many veterans wore.

"These Prisoner of War/Missing in Action bracelets they wear until they either find the body or they return home," Mr Frost said.

"I got this one for Lance Corporal Richard Parker and I've been wearing it for the past four years. You just pick a name from the list, anybody can wear one."

Lance Corporal Richard Parker and Private Peter Gillson were killed on November 8, 1965, during a battle in Dong Nai province, east of Saigon. Heavy fighting meant that their bodies could not be recovered and they were buried by the Vietcong.

As word spread among the veterans about the return of their remains to Australia, plans are being set in motion to commemorate the occasion.

"Some of the boys want to go down to Richmond and see him tomorrow, welcome him home," Mr Frost said.

"They won't let you into the barracks though, there's no point in looking through the fence at him.

"That ceremony is only for special guests, VIPs, brigadier generals, the average digger won't be able to go down and see it.

"Most of us want to do something, it all helps us cope with what has happened. One battalion in Canberra is putting on an armed guard at his funeral and putting on a wake. I think I'll be going to the wake. I'm not going to the bloody funeral," he laughed.

Les acknowledged that the Federal Government is doing a lot to help return those missing from overseas but questions the support that they give to the families on their return.

"The government is doing all it can to find our diggers over in Vietnam and the Americans have thousands missing over there but our government won't even fly his wife over from New Zealand and yet they will fly David Hicks halfway around the world for half a million dollars. That's outrageous," he said.

Despite his concerns about the treatment of Richard Parker's family he knows that it will be of benefit to veterans that he is being returned.

"It's good that they found them and that they will be coming home," he said. "These blokes died for their country and were regular army, not conscripts. And now I don't have to wear this bracelet anymore."

– 9th March, 2010

"FOR the last six years 11-year-old Chloe Morgan has marched proudly alongside her great-uncle Les Frost on Anzac Day - and she plans to do the same this year.

Now partially blind, Mr Frost will be pushed down Summer Street in a wheelchair by Chloe for the first time this year.

Chloe will wear her great-grandfather's medals.

The pair are proud to be in the march together and have rallied against calls from the Returned Services League (RSL) to stop descendants marching on the day.



"I went all the way there to fight in Vietnam, and the only reason I bloody went was to fight for my family," said Mr Frost, who served in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967.

"They [the veterans] all know Chloe and I haven't heard any complaints.

"They know how much the day means to all of us."

While many people who attend the march have been criticised for not dressing appropriately, the day has become so important to Chloe and her family that every year she goes to the effort of buying a brand new outfit to wear with her grandfather's medals, who died, aged 45, after suffering a heart attack upon returning from Papua New Guinea during World War II.

Holding a photograph of her marching with Mr Frost at a younger age, Chloe says she would be devastated if she were not allowed to march with Mr Frost on Anzac Day.

"I don't think it is disrespectful at all, I think we are showing them that we are proud of what they did and respect them," she said.

RSL Orange Sub-branch secretary Les McGaw says he doesn't mind a couple of children marching with the veterans, but would like to see it kept at a minimum and see them acting respectfully.

"Some drag along like Brown's cows and look like they have just come out of the garden," he said.

"The civilians were never in that situation so why should they march in the unit they never served with?"

Mr McGaw emphasised that descendants be kept to one, and that a set of medals should never be broken and shared between two people, out of respect.

However, Chloe's relatives say family plays an important role in the day, with Mr Frost's nephew previously marching in his place one year when he was hospitalised with a stroke, and agree the younger generation play a role in keeping the Anzac Day tradition alive.

"Chloe said as long as he is alive he will be marching, so she is pushing him down in a wheelchair this year," Chloe's great-aunt Donna Cole said.

"They fought for freedom of rights and speech so this goes against the purpose of what they were fighting for."

RSL national president Rear Admiral Ken Doolan (AO RAN) says the organisation of the parades is up to each local branch across Australia."

May he rest in peace



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

So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the *Eyes & Ears* regularly you could bite the bullet and email **Grahame Dignam**: sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join.

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

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

. Other related sites...

. Artillery Surveyors 131 Div Loc Bty...



ARTILLERY SURVEYORS 131 DIV LOC BTY

"Elements of 131 came wandering in from the bush"

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

This website seeks to make contact with the Artillery Surveyors of 131 Div Loc Bty. We welcome your relevant contributions of photos, insights and observances so we might endeavour to expand

131 Artillery Surveying Vietnam record, beyond this window. Please use the [contacts page](#) for details:

<http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/>

<http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/operations/coburg.html>

. Locating , Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield

...notes taken from the LS & TAA website – Committee meetings are held regularly with most held at Paddington RSL commencing at 11.15am.

The next **Committee Meeting and Annual General Meeting** will be held on **20th July 2014** at Paddington RSL. Members are cordially invited to attend.

Details of scheduled Committee meetings will be available in the next issue of the Association's Newsletter LOCREP.



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/

Australian Query on TET at Nui Dat 1968 - I received the following 2-part query recently.

Part 1

"I need information please. 1/83 artillery were at Nui Dat with the Australian Task Force Base in Phuoc Tuy Province in Vietnam. They had 2 x 8" Self Propelled Guns and 2x 175mm Self Propelled Guns. On 02/02/1968 during the TET offensive their lines were mortared and VC entered their perimeter.

I am seeking information on the history of the contact and if possible an account from a serviceman who may have been there at the time....I am a voluntary advocate for veterans dealing with our Repatriation Commission.

Thank you.. Regards Newton Reynolds"

Part 2

"Apart from any incursion is there evidence the lines were mortared during Tet 1968. I am currently relying on a report by Captain Bruce Dittmar of 1 Armoured Squadron Workshop, 1 Armoured Regiment LAD, contained in the OC's Diaries, February 1968 1st to 14th.. Thank you for your time and any assistance."

I had left Nui Dat in late Nov 1967 so can anyone who was still there (HQ, Service and A Batteries) shed any light on this? I had never heard of any VC incursion and the Unit History on the website shows the 1/83rd leaving III Corps for I Corps in February but the details are sketchy. I do know that A Battery fired in support of the Aussies when the provincial capital Baria was under siege by the VC during TET.

Ed - Can anyone add to or assist in any of this??

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

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