

THE EYES and EARS

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Editor: Paul 'Dicko' Dickson email: 131eyeandears@gmail.com

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WOW!!!

Seasons Greetings



From ALL of us to ALL of you, over!!

Then to reflect on Armistice day...

...If a picture paints a thousand words, then this is it...



. **Pete Ravelje** sent in the photo above which depicts the Opera House ablaze with poppies for Remembrance Day 2016.

It really does the day and the location proud.

. **Officer Commanding (OC) – Recollections of the Tour with Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery, Royal Australian Artillery (RAA).**

The series of OC's Recollections continues. These are not official documentations, but memory scratching exercises the Association has asked for to add another dimension other than the factual Reports recorded in the Australian War Memorial (AWM).

This is the fifth in the series and is from **Anthony Eaton**, who was the Det's OC from 14th January, 1969 to 30th July, 1969.

Reflections on Detachment 131 Div Loc Bty South Vietnam January to July 1969 –Anthony Eaton.

The account that follows of events some 46 years ago is made through the mist of a very imperfect memory. Consequently, dates, names and places may not be particularly reliable. Fortunately, my memory has received some prompting by the contents of letters (thankfully saved by my wife) written during my time in Vietnam. I have also refreshed my recollection about the location of a number of Fire Support Bases using the resources of the Internet. I joined 131 Divisional Locating Battery at Holsworthy around March in 1968. At that time the Battery was part of 19 Composite Regt (which subsequently became 8 Medium Regt).

When issuing my posting order some months earlier, the Directorate of Artillery at Army Headquarters advised me that I was to succeed Phil Perrin as OC of the Detachment in January 1969.

My service to that point involved a brief stint in 110 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery in 1965 and then as a Launcher Officer in Army Guided Weapons Trials Unit, Woomera, from December 1965 to March 1968.

Prior to my posting to the Battery, I had virtually no knowledge or experience of locating apart from fleeting contact with the CMF 132 Div Loc Bty in Melbourne. I was attached to the Bty while undertaking post RMC Duntroon civil schooling. This attachment involved only very occasional contact and I don't remember gaining much of an insight into the world of Locating at that time.

My posting to the Battery was as the Task Force Artillery Intelligence Officer (TFAIO) and soon after arrival I was sent on a Regimental Officer's Locating Course at the School of Artillery (covering, over a two to three-month period, Artillery Intelligence, the AN/KPQ Radar, Sound Ranging and a smattering of survey). So far as I can recollect this was the only formal training given with subsequent locating skills acquired on the job.

I have vague memories of Battery and Regimental exercises during 1968 and I remember attending a 1 Field Regt exercise at Tin Can Bay that was part of the Regiment's preparation for its 1969 tour of Vietnam. I was invited to attend the exercise in anticipation of my working as part of the Regiment's tactical headquarters upon its deployment to Vietnam. Towards the end of 1968 I attended a Battle Efficiency course at the Jungle Training Centre, Canungra. I departed Sydney on 13 January 1969 and arrived in Nui Dat on 14 January 1969 and succeeded Phil Perrin as OC about a week later. The only thing of note about the flight to Saigon was that I shared it with Tpr Normie Rowe, the size of whose farewell contingent far exceeded mine!

My handover from Phil was a busy week of familiarisation with elements of the Detachment including visits to various areas of 1 ATF and to a US facility in Long Binh. At the time of my arrival the Task Force was deployed forward undertaking Operation Goodwood so as soon as Phil departed I joined the 12 Field Regiment Artillery Tactical Headquarters (Arty Tac) located at Fire Support Base Julia which was north of the village of Thai Thein on Route 14 in Bien Hoa Province, some 30 kilometres north of Nui Dat. One of the Detachment's radars was deployed in the FSB. The day-to-day role of the Detachment OC /Task Force Artillery Intelligence Officer was, apart from artillery intelligence duties, to act as a duty officer in Arty Tac. This role was shared between the BC HQ Bty, the TFAIO and other officers posted to the Regiment on short-term attachments. The role included fire planning (mainly harassment and interdiction [H&I] tasks), obtaining and issuing ground and air clearances for targets engaged by our guns, clearing targets within our Area of Operations that other artillery elements planned to engage and occasionally the conduct of opportunistic fire missions based on our intelligence. A particularly onerous task was the manual decoding of long lists of target grid references in order to provide clearances requested by our US friends for their extensive H&I fire plans.

Around the end of January while at FSB Julia I was asked to conduct a crater analysis at Bear Cat as part of an investigation into a friendly fire incident. (I can't recall the details or the outcome but I have a vague memory that the analysis confirmed the round came from a Thai unit, the prime suspects).

One operational artillery intelligence task that has remained with me occurred when at FSB Julia (may have been later while at FSB Kerry) following rocket attacks in the area of operations. The launch sites were identified through shell-rep reports from infantry elements and were successfully engaged by our guns. The following day Infantry patrols located the launch sites including a number of enemy dead and unexploded rockets. The 12 Fd Regt CO, Jack Kelly directed me to fly to the site to identify the weapons. On arrival, the infantry patrol commander met me and showed me the site. It was not particularly pleasant; our counter bombardment fire had been very effective. One body was clutching a rocket and another partly buried apparently in some haste. It also appeared that the latter might have been booby-trapped. The weapons were 107mm rockets usually employed by North Vietnam Army forces.

I am not sure exactly when we left FSB Julia but it was towards the latter part of February when the task Force HQ redeployed to FSB Kerry. This was around the time that 1 Fd Regt replaced 12 Fd Regt. A friend, Phil Ratcliff was BC HQ Bty and I shared duties in Arty Tac with him for the rest of my time in Vietnam. FSB Kerry was NE of Bien Hoa, about a kilometre or two north of Route 1.

One issue of concern to the Detachment during early 1969 was a significant reduction in the number of surveyors on establishment. I mentioned in a letter at the time that the survey establishment had virtually been halved resulting in difficulty in meeting the demand for artillery survey in the Task Force. Our requests to address this problem had apparently fallen on deaf ears at Army Headquarters.

The deployment to FSB Kerry lasted through March until we relocated to FSB Jillian on 3 April. Jillian was located about four kilometres south of Route 1 and about 15 kilometres south east of Xa Trang Bom in a rubber plantation. I recall that shortly after our arrival a number of large rubber trees fell without warning resulting in at least one case of injury to persons.

We left Jillian after only a few days and following a brief deployment to FSB Martine returned to Nui Dat around mid-April. B Battery 2/35 US Artillery ("Husky Bravo") accompanied the Task Force to Nui Dat and I believe remained there for a number of months. The BC, Dick Bresario (spelling?) was good company and was a regular guest in the Regimental Officers' Mess!

I can't recall any significant events for the Detachment in the months that followed our return to Nui Dat. It was probably the first time that I caught up with the Section Commanders, Andy Overall and Paul Tys, both of whom had arrived while I was deployed forward. It also provided an opportunity for some relaxation. I remember members of the detachment organising a Rugby League game at one point. The game was played on a dusty patch of ground within the Base that was equipped with goal posts. I had a referee's ticket for Rugby Union so was co-opted to referee the game. I had only a broad knowledge of the laws of League so many of my decisions no doubt left League fans wondering! Never the less it was an enjoyable break for us all from the everyday routine.

In June, a number of rockets were fired at the Task Force base with only one falling within the perimeter. There was no damage. Paul Butcher and I were sent at short notice to do a crater analysis on the one that had landed inside the perimeter. On arrival at the site we found that a press photographer was already there waiting to take a shot of the professionals in action!

Embarrassingly we had arrived without our crater analysis kit and to assist in measuring the angle of entry the only stick we could find had a distinctive dogleg along its length. Nevertheless, the photo was duly taken and appeared in the North Shore Times a week or two later. (See photo at right)

Around the middle of July, the 131 Divisional Locating Battery Commander, Ian Darlington, who had recently succeeded Bob Donaldson, arrived from Australia to visit the Detachment. One aspect of his time with us was a planned visit that he and I were to make to the US Marine Corps base at Đông Hà the northern most town in South Vietnam just south of the Demilitarized Zone. Of interest to us was the employment by the Marines of a sound ranging base to locate artillery sites north of the border.

We arrived at Đông Hà around the 25th July. We had barely settled in and met our hosts when I received a word that my second daughter had been born with a significant disability and I was to return to Nui Dat as soon as possible. I



returned to Nui Dat the following day and then on to Australia a few days later. Subsequently it was decided that I should remain in Australia thus cutting short my posting to the Detachment by some five months. My understanding is that Ian Darlington extended his visit to Nui Dat to bridge the gap between my departure and the arrival of my successor Brian Kennedy.

Anthony Eaton

April 2015

...Ed continued the correspondence with Tony as per other OC's to get a broader picture the "Befores" and "Afters" of SVN. The following is Tony's...

BEFORE...

I graduated from RMC Duntroon into the RAA in December 1960 and joined 103 Field Battery of 4th Field Regiment at Wacol about Easter 1961. The battery was due to go to Malaya (as it was then) at the end of 1961. Before that however, our major exercise was Exercise Tropic Holiday Mount Paluma / Hidden Valley area out from Townsville. My everlasting memory of this exercise was the five-day drive to and from in 2.5 ton Studebakers towing our 25 pounders in convoy at a stately 45 miles per two hours, and being checked for time intervals by the CO with a stop-watch. For the "singlies" of the battery, our trip to Malaya was aboard an Italian migrant ship MV Flaminia. We boarded her in Sydney having travelled down overnight from Brisbane on a troop train, or at least three or four carriages which if I remember correctly were detached from the rest of the train somewhere in Sydney and shunted directly to the dock where we boarded. We sailed late because some of the VIPs who had come to farewell us were loath to leave the hospitality of the Captain's reception for them (or at least so the story went at the time). We got a gun salute from the School of Artillery as we exited the Heads.

About 12 or so days later we docked in Singapore and the next day were bussed up to Malacca and Camp Terendak, which would be our home for the next two years. Camp Terendak the base of 28th Commonwealth Brigade, which consisted of: an infantry battalion from each of Australia (2RAR), New Zealand and the UK; an integrated field regiment (26Regiment RA) of two British batteries and ourselves; and integrated engineer, signals, transport, ordnance, military police and medical sub-units. It was a busy two years with exercises at battery, regimental, battalion and brigade level, and live firing at Assahan range. However, it wasn't so busy that I couldn't manage a quick trip by RNZAF back to Australia to get married to Wendy and then return to Malacca by sea.

Very early in the piece we changed from an eight gun, two troop battery to a six-gun battery, and re-equipped from 25 pounders to 105 mm L5s. We also learned to deploy in a variety of fixed wing aircraft ranging from Beverley heavy transports to single engine Pioneers, a variety of RAF and RN helicopters, and assault boats, all of which required the guns to be stripped and carried in pieces. Incidentally, we used all of these deployment methods at one time or another on exercises. At the end of 1963, the battery returned to Holsworthy and joined 1st Field Regiment.

After a year in 1st field Regiment, I was posted to 131st Divisional Locating Battery at North Head. I won't cover that again as I already did so in my "OC's Recollections", except to recall that the battery was given the job of inducting the first intake of National servicemen at Moore Park barracks in Sydney. Two things struck me about that exercise: the first was how composed the inductees were faced with the prospect of having two years taken out of their lives with little or no recourse; the second was the very professional banners being displayed by the Save our Sons movement - probably the start of the Vietnam War protest movement.

...AND AFTER...

After leaving SVN, I went to England for 18 months to do a Gunnery Staff Course, followed by six months as an instructor in Germany. Then back to North Head to be the Senior Instructor of Locating Wing, once again back at North Fort. Here I was privileged to work with a virtual "Who's Who" of locating artillery. As well as IGs Barry Campton and John Jansen, the AIGs at various times included Norm McManus, Geoff Jebb, Bill Liddell, Kevin Salter, Harry Webster, Alan Cleasby and Fred Lennon.

For the rest of my time in the Army until I retired in 1994, I was fortunate enough to spend most of my time in artillery postings, including stints in the Directorate of Artillery as a major, a lieutenant colonel and finally as a colonel as Director, when Graham O'Toole (ex 131 Bty) was the Regimental Master Gunner. I was also lucky enough to be the Battery Commander of 106th Field Battery in 4th Field Regiment in Townsville and then in 28th ANZUK Field Regiment in Singapore. I was doubly lucky in that Bill Gallagher was the BSM, and I had served with Bill in Malaya in 103 Field Battery. We were in Singapore when Mr Whitlam became Prime Minister and the National Servicemen in the battery were given the option of leaving immediately. Most chose to stay. A couple of years later I became the Commanding Officer of 1st Field Regiment in Wacol, where I was again fortunate to have as RSM, Rex Taylor who sadly died a couple of years ago and Gerry Berson who also had been in 103 Field Battery.

My non-artillery postings were as an exchange officer with the US Army at Fort Hood, Texas, as Director of Combat Development at Army Office, Canberra, as Commander of the 5th Military District in Perth, as Commandant of the Command and Staff College at Queenscliff in Victoria, and as Director General of Operations and Plans at Army Office. I also had postings as a student at Queenscliff, and at the Joint Services Staff College in Canberra and at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London.

Since leaving the army, I completed a degree in International Relations at Deakin University. I also chaired the Conditions of Service Committee at the National Headquarters of the RSL and represented the RSL at hearings of Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal. These days my main interests are golf and grandchildren.

Ed – that's a great conclusion to an army career or possibly any career – thanks Tony.

. We will continue this segment in next month's edition, so watch this space...



. **Allen Morley and Bob Billiards**, accompanied by their better halves did a bit of the US which included the 1/83rd Reunion in their recent US meanderings and here are some photos and goings on that Allen sent in...

Celebrating 50 years with the 1st/83rd Yanks

First came the Reunion Notice from Bill Taggart (New Jersey 66-67). Mmmm, sounds interesting. Ah, it's in Washington DC. We haven't been to the US for eight years. Let's go there. And so, Diane my wife and I went. 50 years ago, this year the 1st Battalion, 83rd Artillery operated from Nui Dat and Baria in South Vietnam. So, this Reunion was a time-important one. The venue was the Westin Hotel at Dulles, close by to Dulles Airport. Bob Billiards, who had worked at 31D listening post adjacent to the 1st/83rd, announced that he would also attend the Reunion.

Bob was the scouting party for 131 and arrived with his wife Cathy on Day-1 from Sydney via Dallas and a delayed American Airlines flight. We arrived on Day 1 and checked in with the registration desk.

A very warm welcome, a bag of goodies, two reunion t-shirts and confirmation that this night was a social get together. Also, checking in was Ben Burrow, an Aussie ex-106 Battery veteran.

The hospitality night was a very social success. Forty percent of attendees were first timers, so it turned out to be a catch up, re-acquaintance and introduction event. I was reintroduced to "Bier 33". The questions from the Americans consistently went along the lines:

- . Where did you come from in Australia?
- . How long was the flight?
- . Have you been to the US before?
- . When did you serve in Vietnam?



Saturday morning was a well organised coach tour of Washington DC. Past the middle part of the city via the Iwo Jima Memorial and a tour of Arlington Cemetery, we arrived at The Vietnam Memorial Wall. A solemn laying of a wreath at the wall (see photo at right) and the chance for individual remembrance followed.

There was then free time to marvel at the line of the Lincoln Memorial, the Reflecting Pool, the towering Washington Monument and the Capitol building in the distance. A few of us chose to visit the Korean War Memorial, which in my view is the most personally telling of all the Washington Memorials.

Lunch was next to the soaring stainless steel arcs which define the relatively new Air Force Museum. Then we continued through town and back to our hotel past the new Trump International hotel, located in the Old Post Office Tower building. This night was a free one for all.

On Sunday, we accidentally slept in. But the Udvar-Hazy annex of the National Air and Space Museum was calling, and it is only a short cab ride away. Bob Billiards was back for a second look at this fantastic collection and was

accompanied by Ken Mitchell (Oklahoma 70-71). My suggestion, for even those without an abiding interest in aircraft, is to just go see it if you can.

Sunday's reunion Dinner was eye opening. It was inspiring to observe the US Veterans Pledge their Allegiance to their country, then followed the Invocation plus the Missing Man ceremony and Roll Call, where a table had been set up to represent those circumstances. Tom 'Beetle' Bailey (Michigan, 66-67) bought me a beer and we chatted for some time.



Pierre 'Pete' Etchamendy (Oregon 66-67) and Roger 'Casey Jones' Hatcher (Ohio 66-67) Bob Billiards (NSW 67-68), can be seen in the photo arguing about unclaimed Nui Dat poker winnings. (photo at right).

The guest speaker was Lt Gen (Ret) Roger Schulz (69-70), President of the Army Historical Foundation, where he described the new Army Memorial currently under construction. And, a delightful touch was the presentation of a Vietnam Veteran jacket pin to all in attendance, including Bob and I. (I have not washed my right hand since shaking hands with a real Lt Gen!). The night was a great success with a real atmosphere of camaraderie and friendship, albeit 50 years on.

Monday was a special, but optional day; a visit to US Civil War battleground at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The coach was late arriving having been caught up in traffic. But the Reunionists were not at all discouraged. First stop was the Visitor Centre and Museum where we were orientated and informed. Then back onto the coach, through the town of Gettysburg itself with an official guide and Brig. Gen. Horace Porter aka Mike Reetz (Pennsylvania 66-67) in full Union uniform to assist.

We drove through the battlefields, climbed to the summit of Little Top, saw where Confederate Gen Pickett's famous, but failed charge, had taken place. Then to the Union defences to see why the charge had not succeeded. We had some time in the small, quaint town of Gettysburg itself before dinner at Dobbin House, a rambling 18C restaurant. The coach return in the dark was very quiet with many weary travellers and then occasional snore.

Breakfast next morning – love that Applewood smoked bacon – was a chance to say farewells and swap e-mail addresses. The Aussie contingent was then off to downtown Washington DC.

Thanks to Bill and Ronnie especially, for a fantastic and absolutely memorable reunion. And Mike for arranging the Gettysburg tour. The 2018 Reunion will be on the West Coast – perhaps even Las Vegas.

Allen Morley (NSW 67-68 and Donald J Trump fan)



Bill Taggart explains the Reunion program whilst Bob Billiards translates for Cathy and Diane



Diane checks out the Halloween display in Gettysburg town



Australian tourist with two bottles of Vietnamese Bier 33

...Bob Billiards continues the 1/83rd Reunion Washington DC 2016 his story and photos...



When I saw that this was the 50th anniversary of "A" battery starting their SVN service I decided that it would be a good thing to get along to it. I spent most of my SVN service at the LP 31D which was located in the "A" Battery 1/83rd Arty compound from the end of September 1967 until we gave over the compound to the ARVN possibly sometime in June 68. The Battery departed our location around late March or Early April 68, just can't remember. The only blokes that I had been conversing with about the reunion was Bill Taggart and Mike Anderson, Bill being the organiser and Mike a friend from the battery who I have been contacting infrequently over the past 10 years.

For those who were in SVN after June 1968, the 31D LP was set up on the top of the guard post at the south-western corner of the compound.

There were 3 Aussies there, Allen and me from our unit and Ben from 106 Battery, me being the only one to work within their compound.

The meeting was held in the "Westin Dulles" and was a very pleasant location, but a bit far from a restaurant centre, but the hotel did have a shuttle service to a local suburb which had lots of eateries and also to the Smithsonian air museum at the Dulles airport.



The reunion did two tours, the first was to Washington DC where we crossed over to Arlington Cemetery for a tour Via the US Marines memorial, then on to the US air force memorial for lunch and then the Vietnam Memorial Wall for a wreath laying ceremony. Also, visited the Korean War memorial and the Lincoln Memorial. From there I think we went back to the hotel.

The US Marines Memorial – Iwo Jima landing

131 Reps – Allen Morley and myself



Changing of the Guard at Arlington Cemetery

On the following day, we had the official dinner where there was a guest speaker, guest speaker was LTG (Ret.) Roger Schultz, President of the US Army Historical Foundation. Lt. Schultz received the Silver Star for heroism in combat, as well as the Combat Infantryman Badge, Purple Heart (two awards), Vietnam Service Medal (with 3 Bronze Stars), Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross (with Gold and Silver Star), Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross (with Palm Unit Citation), and Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Unit Citation.



We all received a pin celebrating the 50 years' service in Vietnam. That's me getting mine on the left and Allen below.





For a full list of official photos here is a link to Johnnie Pearson's drop box site.
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f3v4zw0v5sz3ewo/AACsZIGnoRP--vNhXuLHeLNga?dl=0>



The final unofficial day out was to Gettysburg, hosted by Brig. Gen. Horace Porter aka: Mike Reetz. I had been through there in 1990, but now there is a great new interpretive centre and the battle fields are extremely well set up.



Mail Call...

. **Ernie Newbold** in one of his many roles, this time as an *Eyes & Ears* proof reader (this is a real test for anybody!) sent in the following observations –
 “Well done that man! Who would have ever thought that the Eyes and Ears would reach its 100th edition in 2016. Some 49 years have passed since issue one first appeared off the Roneo/Gestetner machine in the Det. Orderly Room at Nui Dat.
 I found it very interesting to see how the OC's role had changed since we were there, I wonder if the OC's batman/driver also spent time with the forward Arty Tac group? Ernie”

. Paul Dickson – I do organise an Armistice Day (I refuse to let our allies call my memorial “Veterans Day”) Memorial Service at a church in San Miguel de Allende – I recite a piece of poetry and of course the Ode. You can pick the members in the crowd who are from the Commonwealth – they wear poppies.



. Warwick Brooker... ‘G’day Dicko
Many thanks for another interesting E&E.
The locator in the centre in this photo is Arty Surveyor Ken Woodbine (unless he has a [doppelgänger](#)). Ken was at the Coffs reunion this month and hasn’t changed a bit! Brookey”



...the original email from Peter Binns went like this...
Peter Binns left – “Hi Paul I’m on the right try to find names of the other two in pic can you help Photo was taken between July and November in 1968 at 31A Photo can put in *Eyes and Ears* if needed
Regards Peter Binns”

. Ken McNamara, aka Kenneth Francis Aloysius McNamara XXIII, as of today, sent us in an early Christmas wish and a bit of an update...

“Paul,
Good to hear from you. Still living in the hills at Banora Point, caught up with the boys at Coffs. Still making use of the Vets fitness program three days a week. Great female exercise physiologist.
Spending Christmas in the Genting Highlands outside Kuala Lumpur.
Happy Christmas and new year.
Kenny Mac
Kenneth Francis Aloysius McNamara XXIII”

. Ernie Newbold sent in the following email, which as he says may be of interest to the blokes up in the Hunter area – he’s a mate of Ernie’s from the TPI Association...

“G’day Paul,

The following may be of interest, particularly for any members in the Newcastle / Hunter region.

Regards, Ernie.

On 21 October 2016, I seized a watch in Newcastle, NSW that I believe to be stolen and I am trying to re-unite it with its rightful owner.

It is a limited edition "Veterans Remembered" silver coloured men's watch from the Brandford Exchange company. It was a watch crafted to commemorate Vietnam vets' and there was only a limited number of the watches made.

The watch I have is still in its case and has an accompanying certificate of authenticity. I have combed through the NSW Police computer system, State-wide pawnshop systems, I have been in contact with the manufacturer and have even tried Facebook but I haven't had any success.

I saw that the DFWA endorsed the watch and I am hoping that you could get a message out to your members and find out if any of them have lost or had stolen one of these watches.

If your members have any information that can contact me directly via email (or telephone).

On a personal note, I would like to acknowledge and thank each and every one of your members for their Service to our nation.

Regards,

Steve MCDOWELL

Senior Constable, Special Operations Group, Newcastle City Local Area Command NSW Police Force
ph: (02) 4926 6592 mcdow2ste@police.nsw.gov.au”

. **George Clark** got in touch with the following... "Paul, I have today taken the liberty of passing your email address on to my daughter. The reason for this is because she does a lot of work with Vets and every now and then comes up with something important and enlightening. So instead of sending it to me, I have asked her to send it to you, so you can decide if it is worth all the members becoming aware of its ramifications. I hope that you and your family are well Paul, and wish you all the best."

...to follow up Rebecca, George's daughter, contacted me with the following...

"Good morning,

I am the daughter of George Clark, whom I often forward information to that I have accessed as a member of the Vietnam Veterans & Veterans Federation ACT Inc. I have also volunteered with that organisation in the past on appeals and other veterans matters, as I have a legal background.

Would it be possible to be put on your mailing list? Would it also be possible to confirm who I may forward relevant information to? The latest information I forwarded to my father was in relation to a review of services available to veterans in relation to the prevention of self-harm and suicide, which is being conducted by the National Mental Health Commission.

The survey, which closes today, can be found here: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/review>

My apologies for getting this to you on the deadline if you were not previously aware of it.

I look forward to hearing from you. Regards, Rebecca Clark"

...As Rebecca states the information in her email was too late for action by us, but it will serve an introduction to possible further concerns.

. **Allen Morley** came across the following in the Sydney Morning Herald and sent it in...



Ed – It is a subject that the Association did make a submission to the Inquiry, but a decision was arrived at based on the lines of "as it was a South Vietnamese decoration, and as the South Vietnam Government no longer exists nothing could be done."

However, what is disturbing is the Australia Post Catalogue offer to be able to purchase the Medal. I agree with Ashley Blewer, it is not only an insult, but a disgrace.

. **Nominal Roll access** – the DVA have updated their Nominal Roll website link. It links all conflicts easily. Use this - <http://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au>

Notice Board...hey! see what's coming up?

LSTAA (Sydney Branch) final meeting of the year. It is to be held at the Panania-East Hills R.S.L. Club Ltd 28 Childs St, Panania, NSW 2213 at 11.15am on Sunday 4th December, 2016.

. Terry Erbs sent in the following timely reminder for the St Barbara's Day Parade at the Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera...

"Fellow Locators,

A friendly reminder of the upcoming **Regimental Parade and family day at Gallipoli Barracks on Sunday the 4th of December, St Barbara's Day!**

The main purpose of the day is for 20th STA Regiment to formally parade to farewell two long serving respected locators, Russ Hamsey and Sean Voss.

As well the Regiment has planned a fun family day for members and families/guests, with many activities organised and Father Christmas will be there too! Parents' please bring a small Christmas present for your children.

Let me know if you're attending so entry into Gallipoli Barracks and catering can be organised – for visitors the buffet cost will be \$10 per person and drinks are at the usual reasonable price!

The day's program will be:-

10.00am - Parade march onto the Parade Ground No. 1- the grassed area behind 131 Bty and 132 Bty buildings.

Guests and families are kindly requested to be seated before march-on.

10.45am - Parade march off.

11am - Family Day function commences at the Checkley Annex and Menz Club. There will be an outdoor buffet lunch, wet canteen, many activities for kids/families/big kids, equipment displays and music by the Army band.

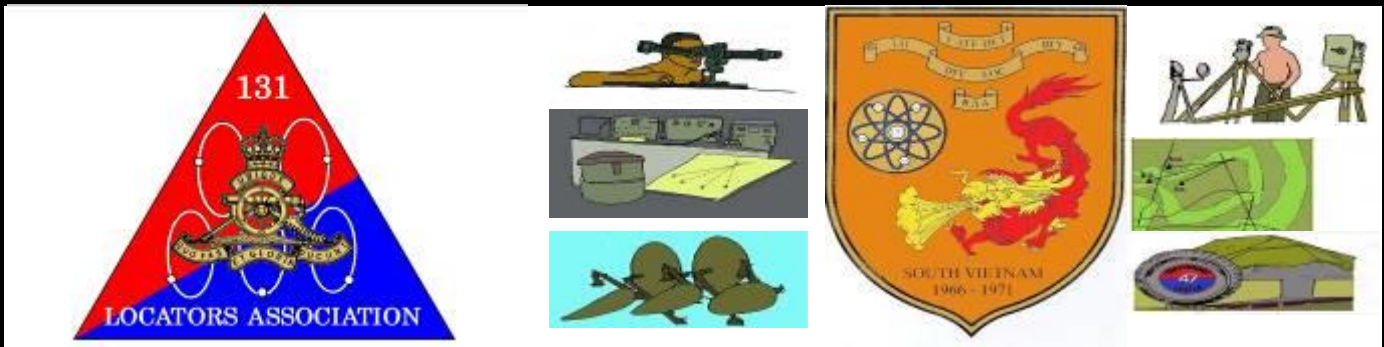
3pm - Family Day function concludes.

It promises to be a great family day, with the opportunity to catch up with old mates and to farewell two highly respected locators.

Terry Erbs

President SE QLD LSTAA

terry.erbs@gmail.com



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>

Presidential perambulations

I don't do Facebook, nor Instagram nor twitter. I am not at all interested in the irrelevant garbage that some put about on their 'lives'.

I was recently in the US and in the countryside, the picture was pretty clear. More Trump-Pence signs on lawns than for Hillary and her mate. That combined with the 'intellectual' and strongly biased media led me to predict a Trump win – before the votes were counted. And now the media is rapidly backtracking against their almost universal US Presidential predictions. Journalism was once getting out to where the story was. Now it seems to be just a matter of checking the chattering messages and writing or reporting what the noisy ones are saying. Australia's ABC is great at this. Story follow through and verification appear to have gone out the journalistic window.

I could not see that Trump's lack of military experience was any disadvantage, nor that he had not previously served at any level of government. Look what we have historically got from both those avenues. Inspect Obama's real eight year legacy for a reality check.

My kids say I am a grumpy old man. OK, I concede that. But remember when you were learning to drive the rule was to leave 2 or 3 seconds between you and the car ahead for a safe distance. Try that now and you will be blocked regularly as someone in the next lane wants to get a car ahead as he steals 2 of those seconds. Who do we voice our complaint to? Drive a truck on the M4 motorway in Sydney and it seems your entitlement is to speed in the righthand lane in truck convoy. Try doing the equivalent on a European motorway or autobahn. But it seems to be OK here. And yet we seem to accept our lot these days that we find less than palatable. Letters to the editor are generally wasted because so few now read newspapers. If you have a view in any way counter to those of the conglomeration

of feminists, asylum advocates, homosexuals and other minorities then be ready to duck for cover whenever and wherever you air that view. Freedom of speech is in reality only enshrined in the US Constitution. Time to go back to my troglodyte existence I suspect.

Allen.

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date:

Tuesday, 13th December, 2016 at 1100hrs

Venue: Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, 26 Humphries Rd., Canley Heights Ph (02) 9604 9975 and for directions - <http://www.canleyheightsrsl.com.au/contact-us/> You're all welcome



. Annual General Meeting – Pertinent Points

– extracted from the 131 Locators Association AGM Date: Tuesday, 15th November, 2016 at 1105hrs...

Attendees were: Allen Morley, Ernest Newbold, Grahame Dignam, Bert Blink, George Lane, Nick Proskurin, Ian Amos, Victor Danko and Gordon Malcolm

Apologies were received from: Des McGuiggan, Merv Nairn, Ron Evans, Warwick Hamilton, State Reps (Rieny Nieuwenhof, Terry Erbs, Ron Mason Geoff Blackwell, Alan Adams, Barry Guzder) Paul Dickson, Stu Sporn, Jim Fitzgerald, Bob Billiards and Ged Carroll.

Proxies were lodged by: Warwick Hamilton, Bob Billiards and Ron Evans.

The Election of office-bearers for the 2016/17 year. Chairman Allen Morley declared all positions vacant and election proceeded. The Chair was handed to Grahame Dignam during this portion of the meeting. All positions were declared vacant.

Appointment of Auditor for the following year. Jim Fitzgerald FCPA has indicated that he would be available to act as Auditor for the Association for the 2016/2017 financial year.

Moved Grahame Dignam Seconded Bert Blink Against Nil Accepted
Jim Fitzgerald was duly appointed.

As the past committee were all eligible for re-election and having consented to stand in their past positions, all were nominated and on the voices, were duly elected unopposed.

The Chair was handed back to Allen Morley and the meeting proceeded.

President's Report for FY 2015 – 2016

I am pleased to present the President's Report for the financial year 2015-2016. This period represents our fifth full-year of operation and shows a continuing growth in all aspects of the Association's activities.

The Association remains financial, viable and, sustainable for the foreseeable future as the financial report illustrates.

The ageing of our members remains our limiting factor. Many of the early Nashos have celebrated or will celebrate their 70th birthdays and others will do so within a year or two of this meeting. Contact with those who served in the Detachment and those who served at Holsworthy remains incomplete, although there has been some success with new contacts in recent years.

The reporting period saw a highlight anniversary for the Pioneers, the first group to be sent to SVN 50 years ago. These Gunners paved the way for others of us who followed as part of the 131 Detachment operational status.

The Association website, www.131locators.org.au continues to give us both a web presence and a defined identity. Bob Billiards has continued as our Webmaster, providing an essential role in doing so. Thankyou Bob.

The site statistics which are regularly reported in *Eyes and Ears* demonstrate the ongoing interest in our activities. Some of the contact source countries are unusual, and the days of access are interesting.

Eyes and Ears, under the editorial overview of Paul Dickson, appears monthly, and still delivers editions of 16-18 pages. I believe that the size and frequency together are major measures of our Association's success. Members' contributions illustrate that we are recording more of relevance from our military past for both history and information. The June 2016 edition was the 94nd in this new series, so the big century of editions will occur around AGM time. And most fortunately, previously "missing" copies of the two previously AWOL volumes from Nui Dat in 1967-68 did surface during the year. Hence we now have a full complement of *Eyes and Ears*.

A range of other activities, meetings, reunions and events were part of the year's program.

Highlights for 2015-2016 were:

. A further twelve editions of *Eyes and Ears*; extremely well done Dicko and your enthusiasm is infectious. A sincere thanks to all of our contributors for stories, photos and some history, without which we would have a very thin monthly newsletter

. a major turnout of 131 Veterans at the 50th Anniversary celebrations at Enoggera in combination with our descendants 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment around Anzac Day 2016

. we dedicated a 131 Locators Association plaque celebrating the Detachment role in SVN along with a plaque listing all those who served in the Detachment in the Enoggera barracks area; the Surveillance and Target Acquisition Association unveiled a restored radar

. a Committee meeting was held at North Fort where one of the surviving radars was inspected and various manuals discovered in the site library

- . production and publication of seven locator profiles; we need more to be submitted to assist our recording of 131 history
- . at the end of June 2015 there were 146 members of the Association, which represents a slow, but nevertheless meaningful growth
- . a 131 paver was installed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Path in Geelong, Victoria during May 2016
- . we launched a range of 131 Locators association polos and t-shirts during 2016
- . regular Committee meetings to manage the Association and the involvement of Regional Representatives to help spread the load
- . contributions from former Detachment OCs setting out their recollections of their time in SVN are being published in *Eyes and Ears*
- . national Anzac Day march attendances and social follow up in each State
- . attendance at national Vietnam Veterans' Day events on August 18th, and
- . an ongoing growth in material, photos and stories on the website.
- . special mention for the Committee members for making things happen for the Association. Bert Blink undertook the role of Vice-President and is generous of his time in attending our Committee meetings, driving from Canberra each month.
- . Grahame Dignam, Treasurer/Secretary, has been the 'araldite' for the Association's financial arrangements, records and operation of the membership database. Ernie Newbold, Nick Proskurin other Committee Members – Vic Danko (Public Officer), Ian Amos, George Lane and Ged Carroll are all acknowledged for their ongoing involvement and support.

Our regional representatives provided local overview and contributed to our planning program. I thank Bert Blink (ACT and doubling up as a Committee member), Al Adams (VIC), Geoff Blackwell (SA), Barry Guzder (WA), Stuart Sporn (NT), Terry Erbs (QLD) and forward scouts in rural Victoria, Ron Mason and Rieny Nieuwenhof, for their collective contribution. A note of appreciation to our Honorary Auditor, Jim Fitzgerald, for again keeping us on the financial straight and narrow.

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

Allen Morley
October 2016

General Meeting – Pertinent Points

– extracted from the 131 Locators Association AGM Date: Tuesday, 15th November, 2016 at 1105hrs...

Financial Membership is currently... 140, plus Associates 2, plus Affiliates 7 Total 149

Presidents report.

In addition to the report in the AGM ,Allen advised that

- . Along with Bob Billiards, he attended the 1/83rd Reunion in Washington DC. And was well looked after by their hosts
- . He was disappointed in the actions of the RSL Senior executives in accepting remuneration that was clearly not appropriate to their positions.
- . He favoured developing the 2017 reunion in Adelaide as an ANZAC DAY event with numbers to be sought by end of Feb 2017.

Photo Album Project. This project is being re-visited and renewed efforts will be made to move it forward.

An appeal will be made through *Eyes & Ears* for relevant photos showing equipment and personnel, operational situations, and text detailing who, what, where and when. This will be a chronicle of the Detachments' full tour in SVN from first to last involvement 1966-1971. It will require the help of soldiers providing the best version of their photographs for publication (better than those used in *Eyes and Eras* which have to be reduced in size for publication).

We would like soldiers from the 68/69 and 69/70 tours to assist identify the people who will be shown. A finished copy will be offered to the Australian War Memorial.

Adelaide reunion 2017. As mentioned above in the Presidents' report we will target ANZAC DAY 2017 for the Adelaide reunion. We will be asking for FIRM expressions of interest shortly to gauge the level of support for this event and then publish a likely Agenda and timings.

. 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...December –

	Name	Regt no	YOB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	DAVID DOUGHERTY	2786594	1946	17 01 1968	04 02 1969	
1	KEVEN BUSH	3792069	1946	18 02 1968	21 02 1969	
1	NEVILLE SMITH	1734352	1946	01 07 1969	25 03 1970	
3	RAYMOND MINNS	4410744	1941	20 05 1966	28 02 1967	† 24.05.97
3	CLIVE DREIS	2785766	1945	05 02 1968	03 12 1968	

6	ALAN ROBB	5715343	1946	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	
7	ANTHONY O'MARA	38334	1940	15 03 1968	18 03 1969	RAEME † 01.01.85
7	TERRY WESTERWAY	215818	1945	04 05 1966	07 05 1967	
8	ROBERT WHITE	311537	1937	22 04 1966	16 05 1967	† 1992
9	ANDREW OPIE 2Lt.	43611	1944	04 05 1966	06 01 1967	
10	HANS WEBER	3789591	1945	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	† 12.07.16
12	MICHAEL DAVIS	4720736	1948	20 01 1970	30 01 1971	
12	CHRISTOPHER BRAZIER	2792185	1948	24 02 1970	25 02 1971	
13	JOHN STANFORD	217765	1949	29 01 1969	21 01 1970	
13	LAURENCE D'ARCY	215649	1945	04 03 1968	04 02 1969	12 Fd Regt.
13	" "	215649	1945	20 05 1971	05 08 1971	131
14	PETER FLETCHER	2783429	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
14	CHRISTOPHER SELF	66981	1949	1969	1970	† UNKNOWN
14	TOM KING	1411018	1937	12 12 1966	12 12 1967	
15	GEOFFREY PRICE	5715931	1947	08 05 1969	25 02 1970	
16	PHILLIP PERRIN Capt.	53105	1936	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	
17	TONY. GOLDSMITH	1732029	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
18	JIM HOGNO	2783680	1945	03 01 1967	27 09 1967	
18	TOM CHECKLEY	311534	1938	22 04 1966	05 08 1966	† 05.08.66 KBA
19	GEOFF BLACKWELL	4718307	1945	20 06 1967	21 05 1968	
19	PETER GAULT	2783644	1945	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	† 24.05.14
19	RODNEY BEASLEY	3797746	1948	04 03 1971	05 08 1971	
19	MICHAEL FERRIS	1733794	1945	23 12 1968	28 03 1969	1st Armoured Regt.
	" "			30 03 1969	03 12 1969	131-RAEME
21	BOB RETROT	1731922	1945	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
21	MICHAEL BOYLE Lt.	217004	1946	17 02 1970	11 02 1971	
21	BLAIR SHEPPARD	1735563	1948	01 04 1970	04 03 1971	
22	JOHN McGREGOR	3787376	1945	20 05 1966	30 04 1967	
22	MICHAEL BURGESS	242895	1938	24 03 1968	26 03 1969	RAEME
22	PETER MEANEY	4719804	1947	03 06 1969	25 03 1970	
22	RONALD RYAN	2793176	1948	19 08 1970	09 06 1971	
24	RON. EVANS	3789614	1945	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
25	STEWART McALPINE	2787471	1946	08 07 1968	04 06 1969	
25	ROBERT HOLDSWORTH	3793058	1945	04 01 1969	03 12 1969	AACC
25	PETER BREMNER	1734544	1947	16 04 1969	16 04 1970	
26	CHRIS BOULLY	4717884	1945	17 04 1967	12 12 1967	
26	DAVID BILLINGS	2793071	1946	19 08 1970	05 05 1971	4 Fd Regt.
28	GEOF. MACAULAY WO2	35753	1936	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	† 27.04.13
28	LIONEL OUTEN	1732195	1945	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
28	JOHN MARTIN Lt.	43613	1941	25 02 1968	21 02 1969	
29	BRIAN HAWKEY	1200572	1946	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	AACC
29	FRED LENNON Sgt.	29712	1927	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	† 25.07.13

Ed – 11 blokes not highlighted is NOT one of our better months! OK, so it's back into - let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 141 and we've sent out 141. Ed – Hell, we only need about 100 more!!

. **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

Name

Erica (formerly Earwicker), Bernard "Barny" George

Regt No
3787334

Rank
Gnr

In SVN
20.05.66

Out SVN
03.03.67

DOB
29.04.45

DOD
23.11.16

Brian "Killa" Killworth advised us of Bernie's passing –

"Hi Paul,

It is with sadness that I inform you of the passing of "Barney" Erica on Wednesday night, 23rd. Nov.

In the last few months he had periods of hope only to evaporate where the end was inevitable. I was fortunate to spend the last few days with him, where he spent much time saying goodbye to many friends; they in tears, he in control!

The Saturday night before his death he had a catered dinner at his place where Beau Roberts, Damien McManus, Bob Tanner, Barney and myself laughed and joked most of the night but ended in tears.

His last words to me; "Mate, I have had a fantastic life"! His repeated message to anyone who would listen; "whatever you want to do, do it now, you just don't know what's around the corner"!

As his death involved the Coroner*, it is uncertain when his funeral will be held.

Kind regards,

Brian(Killa)

Footnote: all with the exception of Bob Tanner have or are recovering from cancer. Damien McManus began a long and unenviable treatment of chemo and radiation last Monday. We all wish him well!

*See article later...

An extract from Barney's Locator Profile...

What did you do before the army: Draftsman with the M.M.B.W.

Service dates: from 29.09.1965 to 28.09.1967 **Intake No:** 2 **RTB:** 1st Plt Pckapunyal.

Regt No: 3787334 **Dates in SVN:** 20.05.66 to 03.03.67 A "Pioneer"

What was your location/s in Nui Dat: Surveyor; Also, spent time with Topographical Unit; American Surveyors at Nui Dat and B Company 5RAR. Witnessed a Woman and child accidentally shot dead whilst on patrol with B Company in Bin Bar who were buried in a crude grave and covered with Banana Leaves. Infantryman Ray Kenney was also shot dead on Aug 14th 1966 on the same operation. Other stories for another time.

Who were you there with: Beau Roberts; Brian Killworth; Bob Tanner; Vic Morrow; Jim Sellword; Ken Whittle; Geoff Lock; Damian McManus; Les Frost; Paul Buss; Terry Weeks; Steve Boutlis; Blue Clausen; Karl Doehermann (received shrapnel wound in his buttock when Nui Dat was Mortared.) Lofty Hayes; Tom Checkley (accidentally killed when he fell from a vehicle returning from Vung Tau Aug 5th 1966)

What did you do after the army: S.E.C. (Surveyor Assistant 3 Months), Leighton Contractors Chainman 18mths, A.M.P Selling Insurance 18mths, Selling Industrial Hose 13Years, Rinnai Australia 23Years, last 15 years as Managing Director; now Retired.

Anything else of interest: Married twice, Divorced twice, no children. Golf, plus Japanese Gardening

Ed – My meetings with "Barney" will be something I will always continue to cherish and remember...



At right in 2009 with Al Adams, Barney, self and Damien McManus and 2010 at left on ANZAC Day with Al and "Beau" Roberts.



***The following article was in Eyes & Ears Vol 9 No 2 February 2016...**

"Bernard "Barney" Erica – A very Personal Story...Brian Killworth sent in the following with regards to a decision being made by **Barney** that needs to be shared...

Dicko,

You may have heard that Barney is suffering from terminal cancer and has made the decision to end his life at a time and a place that he chooses. He does not want to die but he does not want to live on in pain and anguish when he has the right as an individual, albeit not considered legal, to die with dignity and peace.

On meeting a very powerful advocate for euthanasia for over 40 years (Dr Ronald Syme) Barney was then approached by the **ABC's Australian Story programme** to do his story.

During filming for this Barney had what can only be described as a celebration of his life; if you like a wake, at his home. A very emotional and surreal occasion attended by about 50 family and friends, including Beau Roberts, Damien McManus, Bob Tanner and myself.

Dicko, the program will be screened on **Monday, March 7th. at 8pm on the ABC**, would you be kind enough to send a "heads up" to the 131 Family as it's a cause that is believed passionately by many of us and even for those who are not it may offer a perspective that was not obvious to them before! Could I suggest that about Thursday 3rd. March would be good, close enough to be remembered!

The photo (at right) was taken when we were attached to the Survey Corp. for a couple of months to assist with their field work. Barney looks immaculate of course and I give him some "hurry up" about it but he defends it by saying that he was waiting for transport to go on R&R which was true, but I don't let him know that! Or maybe the truth is, I'm just a slob!
Brian Killworth (Killa)



This is the photo (at left) taken at Barney's place the day of his "wake"! Left to right: Robbo, Me, Barney, Damien McManus and Bob Tanner

...Dicko, as I mentioned Barney read this out in his speech during the ABC filming. The producer of the show rang him today to say that the story sends a very powerful message.
The poem is a strong and poignant reminder of the fragile reality of our own mortality? Killa – “



The Clock of Life

*The clock of life is wound but once
And no-one has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.
Now is the only time that you own,
So live, love and work with a will
Try not to dwell in tomorrow*

May He Rest In Peace



bullet

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.

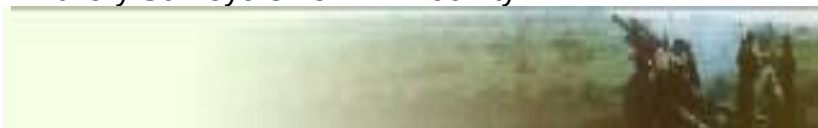
So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the Eyes & Ears regularly you could bite the and email Graeme [Dignam:sectreas131locators@gmail.com](mailto:sectreas131locators@gmail.com) and he could forward you the relevant forms to join - Memberships are available for 1 year or longer deposit a DONATION direct (add your name) to the associations account at "A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133"

Hope we hear from you?

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

. 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/>

. Locating , Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

www.artilleryhistory.org



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

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

. 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://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

<http://www.rnzaa.org.nz/>

Editor contact email: 131eyesandears@gmail.com Ed – Paul 'Dicko' Dickson

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