

THE EYES and EARS

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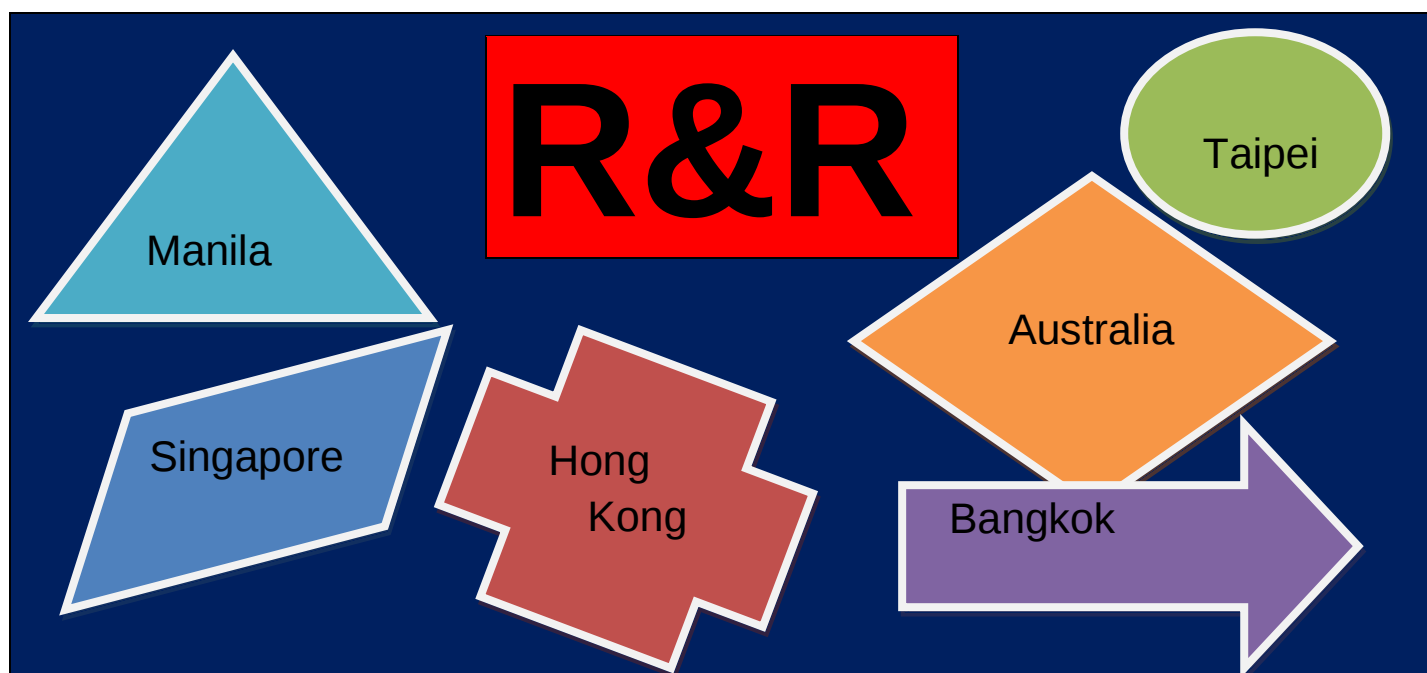
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Did you really go there...?



Yes we asked the question and here are the responses – hold on!

Ed - Yes R&R, the topic that has the underling myth of "What happened on R&R stays in R&R!"

Well let's have the abridged version - if any of it can be remembered - of mishaps, a bit of a laugh, "Did I really go on R&R? And if yes where the hell did I go?" - light-hearted stuff of any sort.

Chris Chapple - I particularly recall sitting next to a USA army dentist on my Pan Am flight to Hong Kong. He said he was on his 5th R&R and explained that he had to move around a lot between units doing his dentistry work, so often in fact they asked him to carry his own personnel file with him. Each time he would open the file and remove his R&R papers. On arrival, they would say "you are due for R&R"!!!! Chris

Stuart Sporn - Went to Bangkok for New Year 1968 which was most unexpected as came home late January.

Good old USA were the masters of R&R but not much else.

Only 2 UC's were on the flight and accidentally teamed up with about 6 African Americans which tested my stamina more ways than one.

Only ate Thai food which the locals said would be too hot while the brothers ate burgers!!!

Had a hectic time including getting a shiny 3 piece suit made (as you do with the brothers) which fell to bits Feb 68

Glad to get back home via Camp Alpha where I turned up broke. Had a 20c Oz coin and explained to the Yanks it was an Oz miracle of crossing a duck with a beaver to create a Platypus!!

I didn't pay for any beer. Camp Alpha's 20 odd stall of crappers was amazing including the shoe shine girls while you were grunting your business. Glad to get home for real R&R.

Rieny Nieuwenhof – Rieny doesn't disappoint again with another great yarn –

"R & R YARN 'The king has no clothes'"

I think it was In June 1971 that members of 131 DLB were informed by OC Capt. Tim Ford that the Detachment would be returning to Australia in August, our work completed, and a Federal election coming up. (was that a coincidence?)

I was due for R & R and given that I would be home by August anyway requested that I spend my R & R in Bangkok. Approval granted, both from the Army and from my wife.

In preparation for my trip to Thailand I thought I would have my civilian clothes 'dry cleaned', after all they had been in a small suitcase since I had arrived in country. My shoes had gone mouldy in the humidity and the trousers needed a 'press'. I put the trousers in with the weekly wash run to Ba Ria. Bad idea!

As time to depart for Bangkok arrived the trousers were returned in a brown paper wrapping. However, they were significantly smaller than when they had been dispatched! Not realising it but the trousers were made of wool fabric and they had been washed with the other army greens.... SHRINKAGE!

Undaunted I left for R & R on the appointed day. Upon arrival at the Bangkok airport I was wearing the trousers (I had no others). They were VERY tight, ended at the calf and were held together with a safety pin.

Of course taxi drivers in Bangkok had a priority list for army guys on leave (only being helpful). Unfortunately, it wasn't the same as mine!!

"You want girl?" "No", I answered, "I want a tailor". Several times during the trip to the hotel the same question ... "You want girl?" "No", was my reply, "I want to go to a tailor to make trousers". By this time he was confused and I was irritable. In desperation he asked "You want boy?" "No, No I want to go to a tailor!" Finally, he relented and took me to his cousin? who was a tailor.

As I sat in my underwear a new pair of trousers were quickly sewn in the back room and fitted. I could now resume my journey feeling much more comfortable, definitely less conspicuous and with some dignity.

Lesson: don't send woollen garments to the laundry! You will be greatly disappointed. Rieny Nieuwenhof"

Geoff Blackwell tests his memory of Hong Kong - G'Day Paul, R&R Hong Kong.

I got to go to Hongers in early January 1968. I had had my appendix out in late November '67 and had a sore guts most of December.

Hammo sent me down to 31D and I was there over Christmas and New Year 67/68 before I got my ticket to Hong Kong. It was a great 5 days, staying at the Park Hotel, looking at some sights, but mostly at the astounding number of bar girls. Hired a car, went to the New Territories, with some bar girls, heckled the Chinese border guards and went to an amazing family banquet.....family of one of the bar girls.

All in all a great time, but if I knew I was going back to the Tet and May offensive I dare say I would have partied even harder.



I have a photo taken in the Park Hotel, (taken by, you guessed it, a bar girl.)

I have been back to Hongers several times in the intervening years. Love to check out the old haunts.

Regards Geoff.

Bob Billiards – his version of events - I was supposed to go on R&R early in February when the lot that were already out of the country returned and I was going to Singapore as I wanted to by my reel to reel Akai and some good speakers and a new camera. TET got in the way and there were no flights out, so I eventually went in March 1968. Had a great time water skiing, swimming and shopping. I did take a bait the night before water skiing as there must have been a bad batch of Tiger at the hotel. The Ski day provided food and drinks and I think we all didn't eat anything or drink a beer. Shopping in Boogey street was great and the Indian shopkeepers called us "John". "Hey John, you are my first customer and you will bring me luck", so you sit and have another glass of "Tiger" and if you go to several shops you can have a free days drinking. Went to the swanky Raffles hotel with an Aussie resident of Singapore and eventually we were thrown out (politely asked to leave by a very English gentleman). Went swimming at Changi beach, visited the Tiger Balm Gardens and aviary. Danced the night away, even though I am a terrible dancer with two left feet.

Paul Dickson – I made it to Singapore and back – Canungra didn't train me for this! Like all of us I'd been in-country for a while living fairly primitively. Other than SVN I had never been overseas before, not that SVN was something overseas travel dreams was made of in those days! Memories, well thankfully I have one photograph (at right) of Barry Nugent and I quaffing a couple of coldies with a couple of yanks. I have no idea who took the photo, plus I have no idea where or when it was taken – possibly early in the trip because I can only see one of me!



I can remember all the best parts about the pub room – a bed for a start (ah clean sheets) v's a stretcher, a shower v's dragging water from the fire pit and slinging it into a canvas contraption with a shower head screwed in, a flushing toilet v's a row of tin dunnies over a pit that whenever the large jobs sent off a fire mission all the lids would lift, along with you arse precariously pointing southward!

I bought a camera and a cassette player which substituted for letter writing to the folks back home. But other than that, I don't even remember the name of the pub and the rest is a blur!

The part of the trip back from Ton Son Nut to Nui Dat was memorable as the RAAF took great delight in paddy field hopping the Caribou which in some cases did lighten the internal load of some of us. Thankfully I have far better memories of Singapore, and also Vietnam for that matter, via trips done much later.

. **Canungra** continues.....

Jeff Schafer "Thanks for the newsletter, Paul - keep up the good work!

Ah, Canungra! That was the real war – the Obstacle Course (up and down the hill, under barbed wire) and the Confidence Course (through flooded culverts, jumping off the tower into the creek), threats that you would "go back to Day One, Week One" if you didn't shape up! Hot weather, lots of cups of tea, sleeping in tents.

Joke #1: DEBUS LEFT! (Someone forgot to send the trucks with back-to-back pews to Vietnam!)

Joke #2: In a 'contact', charge into the ambush! (The last time this happened was at Balaklava in 1854)

The best bit? Walking up a gully with an F1 with an instructor behind and letting off live rounds at pop-up targets!

The worst part? Throwing a grenade, running from one weapon pit to the next and the instructor shouting at you to go back and get your rifle where you left it in the first pit! Luckily there was someone in the platoon that was fit enough to carry the M60 on the Obstacle Course and someone else strong enough to carry the 'Cricket Bag' with the spare barrel!

Three days on 'Lever's Plateau' as the final test. It was fantastic scenery for the first five minutes until we crossed the NSW border into the bush where it was down a valley in the morning, up another valley in the afternoon, hoochies in the rain forest where it was darker at night than the devil's armpit.

Anyway, I'd better sign off, as it's goffer time!

Cheers, Jeff

ps we also managed a visit to Tianjara - in winter of course (pps my spellchecker wants to change Canungra to 'ungracious')

Ed – Canungra = "ungracious" – actually that's not a bad interpretation!

Grahame Dignam is playing catch-up with some feeble excuse about his email "draft folders" – a bit like "the dog ate my homework" yarn –

"I found this in my drafts folder...missed the deadline ...oh well!

pd ,

There was a discussion at the meeting to-day re: the above.

For my part (and **Ern (Newbold)** confirms) we: got to **North Head** for

- Corp training after RTB Sep '66
- Returned for Sig/ Basic Survey course Oct/Nov '66

I was invited to **Tianjara** Dec '66 with transport included and was:

- Trucked in (with a T) – a guy lost a finger when the truck was side swiped near a narrow bridge ??
- Was flyblown, fried, sleeping under hootchies, with a hot meal per day thrown in (it was delivered actually from an offsite military mess)



Ed – Thought I'd resurrect one of Dig's photos – this one shows him "fagging" his guts out at Tianjara – the pressure must have been immense!

...Dig continues...

I survived **Canungra** Battle efficiency course (**Mar "67**)

- ☐ Train from Sydney to Murwillumbah before truck to Jungle Training Centre
- ☐ Mastering falling off the high tower
- ☐ Falling off the cargo rope after climbing the front (or was that another war?)
- ☐ Being dispensed a 500ml bottle of Benadryl from RAP for a sore throat **which made me feel all warm and cozy for a week!**
- ☐ **Killing all sort of vegetation learning the F1 Owen Machine Carbine in the walking shooting gallery where, if you came to the last target on the course with no ammo left – you were designated "DEAD" – shot by the target!**
- ☐ **The injured man carry for ?? metres with pack and weapon.**
- ☐ **Trucked to the 2 day ambush then compass March Out via map and compass– dropped off at noon and it started to piss rain and kept on for the whole 2 days. The enemy had more sense and stayed home so no ambush that I can remember. Moved from position at midnight on Monday and marched where we were told. At some point we halted and the brains trust moved ahead on the trail and consulted their map and then the finger pointing started – first left, then right then down the spur until eventually a coin was tossed and a decision made. As I type this I don't know who made the correct decision but he was responsible for me going to SVN and back. If he was wrong he would have had some explaining to do. "How do you lose 50/60 troops?"**

No Barra Winga / Shoal Water Bay or Wiangaree.

I did have the honour of serving my country on **Fire Picket Duty** in Holsworthy over Xmas 1966 as I was a Sydney resident, a new boy and near my family (so considerate). I spent the days painting fist sized rocks and larger with white Dulux enamel (I remember the sticky paint handles and my resolve never to use that stuff ever again in my life). I think it was for 2 weeks and we did get to "bag" a grass fire on the range one day so not a total waste. I did get 5 days leave after some regs came back after New Year.

As a sidelight I Googled JTC and found this account – He completed in April, so not the same time as us. His account starts on page 20.

<http://rasurvey.org/Viet/Part%201.pdf>

Ed – page 20 , if not a fair bit more, is really worth the read.

21st February - VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION VIGIL - Victoria

The following was published in *Eyes & Ears* (last month) and is an intro to the following article, which **Geoff Blackwell** sent in after he attended the service - **"Paul, for your information & to share via E&Es if you see fit. On the 21st of February 2016 a short service will be conducted at the grave of Vietnam Veterans who were killed in Vietnam & are buried in Victoria. This will be a synchronized event across the State.**

L/BDR James Menz is buried at Marysville, the service there is being organized by Outer Eastern Melbourne branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association. If any locators knew James & wish to attend the short service I could give them some contact details.

Ron Mason"

Ian Finlay was also kind enough to get **Geoff's** photos in.

Geoff's report –

“ For the 98 Victorians interred in Victoria

A remembrance ceremony was held, simultaneously at the 98 cemeteries where they are buried.

I attended the Marysville ceremony to lay a wreath for **Jimmy Menz**, 48 years and a couple of days after his death at FSB Andersen (18th February, 1968).

It was a beautiful late summers day in the village that was obliterated in the 2009 bush fire. Regrowth of the vegetation and the buildings has been nothing short of amazing.

The ceremony began at 1200 hrs, (as did the other 97). There were 7 former 131 members present in a gathering of around 100 people, including Jim's surviving family. It was a brief service, light on speeches, with several of our members placing wreaths and the attending veterans placing a poppy.

There was a concluding speech from the local police officer, who is the president of the Marysville RSL, thanking all for their attendance and the Viet Vets, in particular for their involvement in the Vietnam war. There followed refreshments at the local men's shed.

Well done to the Vietnam Veterans Association.

Geoff.”

Warwick “Brookey” Brooker adds some photo “descriptions” for the following –



Below: Ron Menz's daughter Marianne, Jack Menz's wife Gayle, Jack Menz (Jim's brother), Tony Menz (Jim's brother), Ron Menz (Jim's eldest brother), Helen (Jim's widow; don't know her current surname). That is Jim's brother's headstone next to his.



At left: The cool looking bearded dude with sunnies and a striped tie, standing behind the wreaths is Vaughan 'Mitch' Millar. He's a 131 Locators member.





At left: Amat 'Aff' Binnoore (President, VVAA Outer Eastern Melbourne Branch – organised the event and took the service), Bruce 'Irvy' Irvine, Warwick 'Brookey' Brooker and John 'Kanga' McFadden laying a wreath that Bruce and his wife Elizabeth prepared.



The photo at right with "Kanga", "Brookey" and Bruce has them standing beside a commemorative plaque for major wars – however note that Jimmy gets a separate mention on the plaque because he was the only one from the district who died in the Vietnam War.



At right: Bruce Irvine, Peter Fuhrmann, Jimmy's widow Helen and Warwick Brooker.

"Brookey" adds that he saw **Geoff Blackwell**, who took all the photos (thanks Geoff) and also that he met up with **Michael "Mick" Young** (another Locator Located) and saw Clinton MacNeill, but didn't catch up.

Geoff Blackwell came all the way from South Australia and laid a wreath on behalf of the 131 Locators Association – for which we are very grateful.

Bruce Irvine (Late Mail)...

"G'day Paul,

Sorry for late reply. Just adding to what Geoff has sent from Jim's Vigil Service which was very moving and well done to the Victorian VVA guys for what they achieved across the state last Sunday.

I'm attaching a couple of photos including one with Geoff Blackwell before the service and the other with Mick Young at the Mens Shed afterwards.

Hope they make it in time for you – I only opened the files up this morning.

Kind regards Bruce"



Geoff Blackwell, Bruce Irvine, John "Kanga" McFadden, Peter Fuhrmann and Warwick Brooker



"Kanga", Bruce, Mick Young, "Brookey" and Pete F

Ed – the following is also an extract from *Eyes & Ears* that I thought was appropriate to add to conclude this memorial for **Jim**.

AUSTRALIAN GUNNER OBITUARY RESOURCE

James Leslie Menz

(1 February 1946 – 18 February 1968)

By Peter Bruce, OAM

Nearly all locators will be familiar with the Menz Club. Initially set up in South Vietnam in the base at Nui Dat and eventually transferred to the home of locators at Enoggera in Queensland. The Menz Club was named after Jimmy Menz who was killed in action in South Vietnam on the 18th of February, 1968.

James was born in Melbourne and grew up in the small forestry town of Buxton in Victoria. His family were involved in the timber industry. Jimmy left school and worked in the building industry. At the age of 19, Jimmy joined the Army and was allocated to Artillery and trained as a surveyor. He spent time at Holsworthy and with the 131 Divisional Locating Battery. Jimmy married Helen in August 1967, only months before deploying to Vietnam.

Bill Howe recalled in a letter to Jim's wife Helen that:

"Jim was one of the most conscientious men under my command". He went on to say "His pleasantness and kindness of character singled him out as a man to be proud of. Jim was a country boy, his sincerity in caring about people gave him the touch of humanity that many of us lack."

Another mate of Jim's wrote: "We always found him easy to get along with and provide a good and human balance to the other NCOs".

Jim deployed to South Vietnam on the 10th of October 1967 and served with the Detachment of 131 Divisional Locating Battery attached to 4th Field Regiment. By this time Jim had been promoted to Lance Bombardier.

On Wednesday the 24th of January 1968, Australian troops commenced Operation Coburg to the north of Nui Dat near Xuyen Loc, east of Bien Hoa. The Locators including Jim were trucked to Xa Tran Bom on Route 1 and dug in on a small hill about one kilometre north of that village. Listening Posts were established to support the operation. The next day, Jimmy was with the Survey team at Fire Support Base Anderson and they formed a Listening Post, 31G. This was the time of the TET Offensive and VC and North Vietnamese staged massive attacks all over South Vietnam.

On the 13th of February, several Listening Posts were set up in and around Fire Support Base Anderson. On the night of Saturday the 17th of February, there was an initial contact in the rubber about 1500 meters away from their position. In the early hours of the morning of Sunday the 18th, the VC blew up the magazine in Bien Hoa and a green flare was fired from Xa Tran Bom and the VC launched a mortar and rocket attack on the Fire Support Base. One of those mortar rounds was to kill Jim near their listening post 31G. The VC had dug small pits and had been covered with sand and they jumped out of the holes and killed most of the Australian Standing Patrol in front of the American lines. They then charged across the wire and were killed after causing considerable damage. A green flare from the village ended the attack. A helicopter gunship arrived and shot up the rubber trees as the VC were removing their dead and wounded.

Jimmy had been home with his family on R and R only two weeks earlier.

My thanks to Jimmy's brother Tony and his family for sharing special family photos, articles and letters.

...a continuation of the 21st February in Victoria...

Rieny Nieuwenhof sent the following of another Memorial Ceremony attended by a member of 131 –

"Hi Dicko,

Here is an image of John Dellaca (131 DLB) laying a poppy at Ian Scott's grave. Ian James Scott was killed in Vietnam in 1968. He was a member of 12 Field Regiment and is buried in Camperdown, Victoria.

This Graveside Vigil was part of 98 simultaneous Vigils across Victoria honouring those killed in Vietnam and buried/interned in Victoria, part of the 50th Anniversary events.

Rieny"



Mail Call...

. Mail Call – just a new section on trial recording bits and pieces of "incoming" from blokes just saying g'day to anything of possible interest...

George Kijurina "Hi Paul, I was at the old School of Artillery at North Head last week. The owner that's now operating his wedding function business from the old Sergeants Mess was telling me that he heard that there a reunion taking place for ex staff and gunners that had attended the School. Have you heard anything about the re - Union ? Cheers, George"

Ed's response... "George, Good to hear from you - hope all is well on the home front?

Now what you've said is curious and I have NO idea, so I've copied Graham Dignam, Kim McGrath and Kev Browning in this response to rattle some of their collective grey matters to see if they can enlighten us?

We'll sit tight and see what develops. Paul"

then George responds with... "Hi Paul, Thank you for the response , yes mate , all good so far for 2016. ..

It would be good to hear from the guys if they do, great spot for a re-Union party !!

Cheers George

Ps. May be a great opportunity to open up and explore the Field Hospital under the parade ground !"

See further down about the "Field Hospital"...

Kim McGrath gets back with the following... "Hi Guys, There was some movement on Facebook that somebody was trying to organise a get together at the old School of Artillery at North Head.

I forget who it was but I have the impression that he lived interstate so to organisation from there would be very difficult. I have not heard anything more for quite some time.

The Australian Artillery Association considered some time back about running a Gunner function there but the size and catering ability was not tenable for our ideas.

If I hear anything more I will send it along. Ubique, Kim



George, this should be two people that you recognise.

Ed got Kim to answer a few questions and the rest is what came...

"Hi Paul,

George has known my wife, Tracey, since their high school days in Sydney. As it turns out he was one of my soldiers in 131 Div Loc Bty. A small world.

The photograph was taken at the National Gunner Dinner that was held in Caloundra in August 2014. The Australian Artillery Association (Graham Hampton & Kim McGrath) spent two years putting it together.

It turned out to be a huge success with over 400 Gunners in attendance. We launched the Restoration Project for the 18 Pounder on behalf of the RAAHC and had the Arty Band in full swing.

Check out all the familiar faces on our Photo Gallery at: <https://ubique.smugmug.com/2014-National-Gunner-Dinner/2014-National-Gunner-Dinner-Ph/>

For your information we have already begun planning for a repeat show. The National Gunner Dinner Saturday 27th May, 2017 also at the Events Centre in Caloundra QLD. We already have 124 personnel registered and we envisage a total of around 600 pers.

It will be another great evening. Information is on our website at:

http://australianartilleryassociation.com/2017_national_gunner_dinner/2017_national_gunner_dinner.htm

The Registered Attendees are in there so you can see who has already signed on. Ubique, Kim"

Ed - What Hospital?? – "Ok George what "Field Hospital" under the parade ground??? Never heard of it! Paul"

"George, The "field Hospital" - I'm going to run this past the same panel as before, Grahame Dignam, Kim McGrath and Kevin Browning - it's a real mystery to me. Paul"

...Kevin Browning responds with – "Paul, It was certainly a rumour running around North Head for many years but we have never found any evidence to confirm the story. Regards, Kevin"

Stuart Sporn - You may be interested ?

Cliff Stribling KIA Somme France 25/4/1918

Cliff is my wife Jan's great uncle. Had his legs shot off in an artillery barrage. He is buried in a public cemetery near the Somme River.

Some enterprising French in the small village where he is buried want to change the name of their public school to the Cliff Stribling School in 2018 and are rounding up relatives to attend.

It is amazing what the committee is doing and the research they have done which challenges my belief. **We certainly will be there** - I will send you a copy of the Chairman's latest newsletter later today

...Ed – the following is the "Chairman's latest newsletter" which Stuart mentions. Please read through and DEFINITELY click on the link – it's a truly amazing story – the lump in the throat is well worth the experience when you read through it...

Subject: Some news from the Somme, France.

Dear pen-friends from Australia,

You receive this message because you are somehow related to **Clifford Stribling, the Australian Private** to whom

the people of Blangy-Tronville in France would like to pay tribute, in memory of all Australian soldiers who fell at the battle of Villers-Bretonneux. The ceremony is to take place on Sunday 22nd April 2018 at Blangy-Tronville.

I suppose that all of you have already heard of this project so far. If not, every detail and pictures can be found from http://www.ville-blangy-tronville.fr/general/html/Australia_2018.php

We had a committee meeting this afternoon, so I thought it would be an occasion to send you fresh news about it.

We wish to get the people who live in the village involved in the project. That's why we'll organize at least two conferences about the First World War and Anzac forces in the Somme, with visits to the Battlefields in 2017. We'll also have a drama play about this subject-matter performed at the village in 2017 too.

On the day of the celebrations on 22nd April 2018, we plan :

Breakfast in the park of the Tronville castle, with Australian visitors and officials, a competition of decorated houses on the theme of French-Australian friendship, a visit to the cemetery (see attached picture of Clifford's tombstone in Blangy-Tronville), the renaming of our school as "Clifford Stribling School", lunch party on the main square of the village, a concert at the Church by a French-German choir. An exhibition at the library of the village.

Another project is to make a comic-strip book about Clifford's tragic story and his stay in our area. A professional cartoonist who lives in the village was appointed to do it. His name is Tristan Robert. We found detailed information about Clifford from internet-based military records, but if any of you has documents such as letters by him, or about him, or photos (we already have a picture of him in profile with a soldier's uniform, see following)... we would be grateful to have copies of them. That would help the story-line.

Some of you have already told me that they might come to our place for the occasion. We would be honoured to welcome you among us. So far, nobody has confirmed their coming, please do so when you are quite sure about it.

Several inhabitants have already volunteered to accommodate Australian visitors for the night between 21st and 22nd April 2018, or more. Some of them will need to brush up their English a little, so I offered to give them lessons. I have been an English language teacher for many years, so it shouldn't be too difficult. There is also Aisling, who lives virtually opposite from my house. She is Irish, and proposed to help me in this task, among other things that she does. In order to find out as many relatives as possible of the Stribling family, we have mapped out a Stribling family tree, which may be interesting for some of you to have. If you don't want your name to be mentioned on it, please let me know as soon as possible. Otherwise, I'll send you the document to everybody in a couple of weeks.

There is a saying in France according to which one may send New Year's wishes till the end of January. If so, then I take my last chance to do so. I must own up that 2015 was not a year that the French people can regret. We are happy to be over it, and wish that the future brings much brighter days to our country and to the world. In that respect, the fervour that I found in your responses to my emails is very rejoicing and heart-warming. It is essential that some people who do not know each other and who live in different hemispheres be united by a common sense of memory, common values and beliefs, isn't it ? I wish you all the best for 2016.

Please share your reactions and comments by clicking on the "answer all" button, if you find it relevant to do so. We are eager to hear from you all. Avec mes amitiés, Alain.

N.B. Copies of this email are sent to Eric Gueant (the Mayor of Blangy-Tronville), Sylvain Halgand (Deputy-Mayor), Aisling Achoun (member of the committee), Tristan Robert (member of the committee and cartoonist) and John Tayler (member of the Clare Regional History Group).

Ed – Amazing!

David Bahler "Another great newsletter Dicko.

I am about to start putting our first one for the year together – due out 1 March so I have some time up my sleeve.

Cheers, and keep your powder dry !! Ubique

David Bahler, Editor, Royal NZ Artillery Assn Newsletter, Sky Pilot to the Royal NZ Artillery Assn"

Rieny Niewenhoff "Hi Dicko.

I'm sitting here in my caravan on the Surf Coast and wondering why a year in my life, for me 45 years ago, keeps cropping up in my thoughts. I was among those who didn't lose a mate, I had no primary 'stressor', yet the memories are as vivid today as they were then. The Locators are an active lot (thanks Allen and team). Maybe a possible topic might be why was that experience in Vietnam so much a watershed in people's minds? What changed in an individual? Maybe it's too introspective and I irrelevant? Life has continued in different ways for all Vietnam vets. Just being a little philosophical I suppose? Regards"

Ed – I responded with – "Rieny, "Memories", "Reminiscing", being a little "philosophical" - none of these things are peculiar to you and it's great to be able express them in one form or another.

Like in that song (can't think of the name - is it "I was only nineteen") - the sound of a helicopter gets a reaction from me.

Hey, who would have thought some 40 years later you'd be sitting in a caravan in a great spot ("surf coast" - where exactly?) and be able to even think!! Hey if you'd said to me 20 years ago I'd be living in Mexico and enjoying it, I may have questioned your sanity!

The mail I get, most of it anyway, I find rather therapeutic in one way or another - a lot of it is from blokes I have never met, possibly will never meet, but we can still say g'day and have something in common. Paul"

Grahame Dignam thought the following photograph perhaps explained a lot! He said – “Obviously a photo of the compasses issue at Canungra circa 1960
Ed agrees and adds “It is possibly similar to the one used by Ian Yerbury (late) in Canungra!



...Now all of this mail came in on the same day, not far apart, and in this order – Morley, Sporn and then to cap it all off Dignam...

Allen Morley introduces - The New Minister

We now have a new Minister for Veterans Affairs. Although you would not know that from the DVA website, which is still identifying the old Minister. Ho, hum.
Now responsible for Veterans Affairs is **Dan Tehan**, the Member for Wannon in Victoria. Ironically the former holder of that seat was Malcolm Fraser, who invited many of us to be Nashos in the 1960s, as Minister for the Army.
Minister Tehan was elected to the Federal Parliament in 2010.



Stuart Sporn sent this piece in – “Not too many Australians probably know about this. The same Jap fleet/aircraft that attacked Pearl Harbour did Darwin a couple of months later. There were 64 raids on Darwin and more bombs dropped than Pearl. The Army/Navy/Airforce were very badly equipped to provide any resistance and locally it is another Canberra joke.

The AA Gunners had to improvise with fast/short exploding shells as the fighter aircraft were very low. Years ago I met Bob Osterreicher who flew Kittyhawks for the few Yanks based here. He was the first to smoke a Jap aircraft
Yea..... it's only bloody Darwin and who cares !!!

...then Grahame Dignam provided this...



Media Release
The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC
Minister for Defence Materiel

Friday, 19 February 2016

Remembering the Bombing of Darwin

Dan Tehan, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, today urged Australians to pause and remember the day the Second World War came to Australian shores.

“On this day 74 years ago, Australia faced the first World War II attack on our home soil,” Minister Tehan said.

“188 Japanese aircraft mounted two waves of attack on Darwin, claiming more than 240 lives and causing widespread devastation across the city.”

This was followed by a further 60 attacks on Northern Australian towns and cities over the next 20 months, with the last on 12 November 1943.

“Luckily, no other raids had the same devastating result as those on 19 February, as defences were strengthened and better organised,” Minister Tehan said.

“The Bombing of Darwin is an important part of our military history and should never be forgotten. To this day, it remains the largest attack mounted on Australia.

“As the nation commemorates the Anzac Centenary 2014–2018 and a Century of Service, we remember the service and sacrifice of all those who have served over the past 100 years, and those who continue to serve in wars, conflicts and peace operations.”

A memorial service takes place every year at the Cenotaph at Bicentennial Park, Darwin with a Second World War air raid siren to be sounded at 9.58am to mark the precise time the first attack took place.

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
For the clock may then be still.*

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.



**Don't miss the programme on ABC,
“Australian Story”,
Monday, 7th March, 2016**

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

April 2016 at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, Brisbane 50th reunion weekend



— Hey it's now March 2016 (well possibly by the time you read this it will be!) already and it's almost “crunch” time. Time is galloping by and it's really time NOW for getting organised for Brisbane in April!!!

It'd be great to catch up with a bunch of the blokes again at the 20 STA Regiment barracks at Enoggera – you'd better get cracking!

**DON'T LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE,
It's less than 8 weeks to go!!!
Have a read of the next article by Allen Morley...**

Enoggera Scouting Mission...by Allen Morley

It was St Valentine's weekend when four veteran locators set out on a scouting mission to the 20STA base at Enoggera, Brisbane. The team consisted of 131ers **Grahame Dignam, Terry Erbs, Allen Morley** and **Keith Ayliffe**. The purpose was to meet with senior officers regarding plans for our **April 2016 50th anniversary Commemoration events**.

We were fortunate to meet with the new 20 STA 2ic Major **Geoff Meekan**, Major **Russ Hamsey**, RSM **Sean Voss** and Sgt **Andrew Wallace**. At dinner the CO Lt Col **Peter Grant** joined us for an ale or two.

Grahame Dignam presented a Detachment 131 plaque to 20STA, similar to the one dedicated at the Australian War Memorial in 2012. The intention is to mount the plaque on a plinth near the restored radar.

The program agreed upon is:

Saturday 23rd April, dinner at Kedron-Wavell RSL, 7.00pm for 7.30. The dinner will be a buffet, with the first two drinks to be provided by 131 Locators association.

Sunday 24th April, Commemoration event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first Detachment – the Pioneers - arriving in South Vietnam...

.Commencement will be at 9am, with 131 veterans and families parading before the 20STA Regiment. The restored radar is to be on display for the first time, plus the Detachment plaque and a newly minted brass plaque listing all who served with the Detachment in South Vietnam. You have to be there to ensure your name has not been missed.

.The ceremonies will be followed by a BBQ at the Menz Club on the Base.

Monday 25th April, Dawn Anzac Service commencing at 4.30am, followed by a Gunfire Breakfast at 5am.

Attendees to then make their way to Brisbane for the Anzac Day March which will commence about 10.00am for the Regiment and Detachment members. Recovery will then be at the Stock Exchange Hotel in Brisbane.

Full details will be provided closer to the Events.

However, hotel accommodation and flights are filling rather quickly, so we recommend making those arrangements as a priority.

RSVP by 31st March 2016

direct to:

Allen Morley – [President locators131@y7mail.com](mailto:President_locators131@y7mail.com)

Grahame Dignam – [Secretary / Treasurer sectreas131locators@gmail.com](mailto:Secretary / Treasurer_sectreas131locators@gmail.com)

131 Locators Association Inc. Website http://www.131locators.org.au/about/131_locators.html

The \$100 deposit per head (includes the Saturday night dinner at the Kedron-Wavell RSL and the Sunday BBQ at Enoggera) can be made Direct to sectreas131locators@gmail.com, supported by your name as follows :

Direct deposit: A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW
BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133

or

By cheque – Make payable to: 131 Locators Association Inc

Mail to: Secretary/Treasurer, 131Locators Association, 8 Darling St. ABBOTSBURY NSW 2176



L to R: Sgt Wallace, Maj Hamsey, RSM Voss and 2IC Maj Meekan at 20STA base protecting the restored AN/KPQ-1 radar



I think the site for the radar should be about here ... maybe. Russ Hamsey, Terry Erbs and Keith Ayliffe debate the meaning of radar life.

You could not see this clearly ... now you can
131st Surveillance and Target Acquisition Battery, from the 20 Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment had a badly weathered sign on the wall of their HQ at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera. As readers will note, it was pretty hard to read.

So the 'old' 131 Div Loc Battery decided to help the 'new' 131 Battery. We paid for the sign to be repainted, and this is how it looks now: see below



This is serious,

**. THE ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOU
. THE 20 STA REGIMENT RAA NEEDS YOU**

BUT, ABOVE ALL AND MORE IMPORTANTLY

**. RW HAMSEY, MAJ S7 (Trg and Stds)
20 STA Regt**

Gallipoli Barracks

NOT ONLY NEEDS YOU

HE ORDERS YOU TO ATTEND

**THE 50 YEAR REUNION TO BE HELD AT -
GALLIPOLI BARRACKS, ENOGGERA**

ON SUNDAY, 24TH APRIL 2016

He'll see you at 0900hrs sharp

Gee Russ looks pretty serious and I thought he was a quiet bloke!



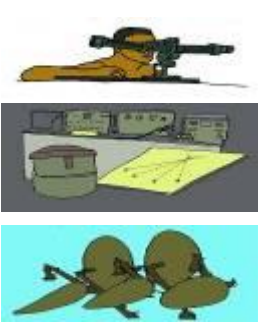
August 2016 in Canberra – Vietnam Veteran's Day

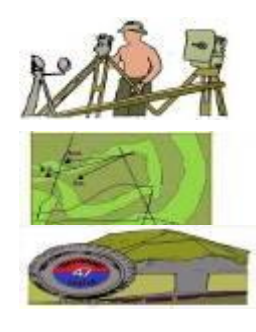
Not to be missed.

**50th Anniversary Battle of Long Tan.
Function Great Hall Parliament House.**

Vietnam Veteran's Day Service Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Det 131 DLB Commemorative Dinner.



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>

A few well chosen words of wisdom from the Sec/Treas - "If you have had a busy year, now is the time to check your 131 Locators Assn membership is current.
 Email sectreas131locators@gmail.com to check.
 Grahame"

Presidential perambulations

As mentioned elsewhere in this edition, Grahame Dignam and I travelled to Enoggera to meet with Officers from 20STA. We were shown around the general area occupied by the Regiment.

And we found two interesting banners on display.
 The first is shown at right:

Yes, it is the banner from the Welcome Home Parade of all those years ago. The banner is now on display in the 131 Bty HQ. It is great to see it there, because we feared that it had somehow been lost.



The second find, was this very old 131 banner (right) –

No-one seems to know its provenance. The appearance is of a couple of flags cobbled together. Keith Ayliffe suggested that it may have come from CMF 131 'down there [below the School of Artillery] in Manly'.

Can anyone out there help out with this investigation? Allen



. Upcoming Events Calender –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 15th March, 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

. Pertinent Points – extracted from the 131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 16th February, 2016 at 1100hrs...

Attendees were: Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam, Ernest Newbold, George Lane, Ian Amos, Bert Blink, Nick Proskurin, Terry Westerway, Ged Carroll, , Des McGuigan.

Presidents report.

Allen reviewed the Enoggera Recce trip. He and Grahame, accompanied by tour guide Terry Erbs made visits to:

- Kedron-Wavell RSL to inspect and discuss our needs to host the 50th Anniversary Re-union Dinner on Sat 23rd April – most impressive.
- Met up with Keith Ayliffe preceding our visit with 20STA Exec Officers Mjrs. Hamsey and Meekin and RSM WO1 Sean Voss to settle on details covering the formal handover of the restored Radar to 20STA, the Dedication of a unit plaque in Remembrance of 131 Div Loc Bty personnel who served in SVN 1966-1971, and also a plaque listing the Names of those involved in the conflict.
- Shared a meal with the same gentlemen plus Lt Col Peter Grant OC 20STA at Graythorne RSL
- Contact with the Polo and Tee shirt provider has resumed and delivery is expected shortly.

Public Officer Report.

Vic apologised for his non attendance due to medical appointment.

He has made an offer which will provide some assistance that will allow a vet who may not attend this years 50th anniversary SVN events to actually attend.

Due to the short notice for the Anzac Day March and Plaque dedications at Enoggera, the committee has undertaken to investigate if we can make it happen for the 50th Anniversary of Long Tan Day activities in Canberra in August. More to come.

3D model of Radar. (Bert Blink)

If the original radar is accepted by the NVVM Philip Island, it will be transported to the museum at our cost after an undertaking to meet the RAAHC conditions for display. Failing that ,the proposal is for a 125mm 3d computer-produced model of the Radar. This would fill the void for the NVVM. It would be placed in the Det 131 DLB display case and could be a very good reproduction at the appropriate cost (unknown at this stage).

After the Assn pays for the production of the computer file, the model could then be reproduced in volume for interested parties as mementos with a cost in the vicinity of \$400 each (to be confirmed and dependant on level of interest). More information to come.

Current Meeting Topics

Ongoing: Arrange 2016 Enoggera event including sourcing Plaque and Personnel list item.

Ongoing: Arrange the Canberra 2016 Vietnam Veteran's Day 50th Anniversary programme (including Commemorative Dinner.

131 Bty flag project

North Head Flagstone paver dedication date

Updates Completed on Prior Action Items

OCs recollections project has been completed and all are available on the website.

Meeting Minutes are now on the website in Members Only area requiring password access.

Refurbishment of the 131 Battery sign has been completed. Planned handover of the invoice for payment has been delayed.

. 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...March –

March	Name	Regt No	YOB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	EZIO LOMBARDO	216284	1946	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
2	GEOFF HOLDEN	2785828	1945	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
2	JAMES TOWNLEY Maj.	17072	1939	14 06 1963	22 06 1963	103 Fd Bty FARELF
	" "			22 04 1966	19 08 1966	131
	" "			30 04 1970	28 05 1970	HQ AFV
2	PETER BENNETT	3794060	1948	26 08 1969	04 06 1970	
3	RIC. MARQUES	3790008	1946	10 06 1967	21 05 1968	
3	RAY SMITH	3787666	1945	20 05 1966	02 05 1967	
3	GRAHAME LEE	2787457	1947	23 04 1968	23 04 1969	
3	ROGER STANLEY	2788155	1947	08 11 1968	27 08 1969	
3	RALPH MITCHELL	2788073	1947	08 11 1968	27 08 1969	
4	JOE CLENDINEN	17648	1945	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
7	RODOLFO MARSANI	3796861	1948	20 08 1970	20 08 1970	131
	" "			20 08 1970	05 05 1971	4 Fd Regt.
8	RUSSELL JACKSON	3793090	1945	24 02 1969	28 11 1969	
8	BARRY COOKE Sgt.	54886	1946	16 09 1968	24 09 1969	RAAOC
8	DES McGUGGAN Sgt.	214722	1944	20 01 1970	21 01 1971	
11	BOB TANNER	6708362	1945	21 05 1966	28 04 1967	
11	PETER McKIE	2787728	1947	22 04 1968	23 04 1969	
12	JAMES FITZGERALD	2782044	1945	04 05 1966	29 04 1967	
12	GREGORY LUCAS	1735725	1949	20 08 1970	20 08 1970	131
	" "			20 08 1970	29 10 1970	4 Fd Regt.
13	JOHN (JACK) HEYES	3791085	1945	05 12 1967	03 12 1968	
13	ALLAN CAMPBELL Sgt.	18257	1946	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	† 2009
	" "			05 02 1968	31 03 1968	
14	NEVILLE WORTLEHOCK	54941	1947	29 04 1968	30 04 1969	
17	GEOFF LOCK	2782439	1945	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	† 09.09.10
18	VIC MOREAU	1200577	1939	22 04 1966	23 01 1967	
18	ROY CLAUSCEN	214873	1941	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	
20	BRIAN CAMPBELL	2781310	1945	22 04 1966	30 04 1967	
20	BARRY FOLLINGTON	2783144	1945	12 12 1966	27 09 1967	
20	IAIN KENNEDY	3791023	1945	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
20	RONALD ROBARDS	216900	1948	21 02 1968	21 02 1969	
21	GARRY SMITH	2792048	1947	15 04 1970	17 12 1970	† 19.01.12
21	MICK KING	216504	1948	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	
21	WARREN JAENKE	1735584	1946	20 02 1970	11 02 1971	
22	GREGORY PECK	2790401	1948	04 11 1969	04 06 1970	
23	DEREK HINDE	2787403	1947	01 07 1968	14 05 1969	
23	MARTIN KRYNTJES	5715291	1947	26 08 1968	04 06 1969	
25	GARTH NICHOLLS	216381	1948	{05 02 1968	11 02 1969	
	" "			{05 11 1969	28 11 1969	1 Fd REGT
25	ROBERT HARGREAVES	2790343	1948	04 11 1969	04 06 1970	
26	GEORGE LANE	2781630	1945	04 05 1966	11 12 1966	
27	ERIC WINN	219656	1951	30 05 1970	07 08 1970	131
	" "			07 08 1970	05 05 1971	4 Fd Regt.
29	JEFF REID	3790495	1946	26 09 1967	17 09 1968	† UNKNOWN
30	FRANK HALLIDAY Sgt.	215105	1937	02 01 1967	13 12 1967	RAEME
30	EDWARD CHASE	2782043	1945	04 05 1966	11 12 1966	
31	LESLIE CAHILL	2412281	1947	20 05 1966	30 04 1967	
31	GRAHAM HISLOP Sgt.	15290	1935	22 04 1966	03 03 1967	
31	PHILIP SHEEDY	4719418	1947	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	

Ed – 16 blokes not highlighted is a bit dodgy – can we extract our multiple digits and Locate a few more!. For some odd reason we hadn't Located **Kim McGrath** according to our January's **Birthday's in the Battery**, (Kim's birthday is

in February obviously) mind you we have been emailing etc him for yonks. Thankfully he got us to update our records – well at least Kim reads *Eyes & Ears*!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received **129** and we've sent out **129**. **Ed** – Ok still looking for 2 more this month??

. **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.



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

. **Locating , Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...**



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield

...notes taken from the LS & TAA website – *the last in the series of Coffs Harbour re-unions will take place next year on the October long weekend (30 Sep-1-2-3 Oct 2016). Please note this in your calendar and start planning travel and accommodation early.*



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://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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

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