

THE EYES and EARS

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Supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs

Welcome back Tom, you're on your way home...





First of 2 RAAF C-17's arriving at
RAAF Richmond, 2nd June, 2016





The Locators who attended the service – back row – left to right – Ron Mason (Pioneer), Allen Morley, Ernie Newbold, Grahame Dignam, George Lane (Pioneer), front row - Merv Nairn (Pioneer), Major Russell Hamsey (20 STA Regt), and Ged Carroll (Pioneer).

Tom Checkley finally made it back to Australia

The weather portents were not exactly ideal. A heavy fog and 10C on the ground in Richmond added to the occasion. But a group of 131ers was keen to welcome the late Gunner Tom Checkley back to Australia from Terendak Cemetery, Malaysia as part of the Government's Repatriation program.

There were four *Pioneers* present – George Lane, Merv Nairn, Ron Mason (supported by his wife, Margaret) and Ged Carroll – three *secondi* – Grahame Dignam, Ernie Newbold and Allen Morley – with Major Russ Hamsey from 20STA providing contemporary support to the group. We were bussed to RAAF Base, Richmond after having our names checked off on the DVA list. A bit reminiscent of our introduction to recruit training.

We were first herded into a marquee where coffee, water and biscuits were offered. An enquiry as to whether anyone was representing Tom from the family side was confirmed in the negative, whilst an offer to represent Tom was firmly rebuffed. A total of about 150 veterans were present to pay their respects. This observation party was kept well clear of the family and friends group.

Next two C-17 aircraft carrying the repatriates landed and taxied out of sight. However, we knew then that Tom had made it back to his adopted home country. After a half hour interval, the C-17s taxied back to the area where we were waiting and parked at 130 degrees to each other with the aircraft tails facing the audience. All the Veteran observers were provided with chairs at the side of the ceremonial area, and then the aircraft ramps were lowered in unison.

To the skirl of a single piper and the kettle drummer's beat, the coffin bearers began their slow march down the ramp of the more northern aircraft, between the ranks of the Honour Guard standing at present arms into a nearby hangar set up to receive the coffins. The Ramp Ceremony was then repeated for the second aircraft. It was a ceremony executed both professionally and sensitively.

We were able to then listen to the words of Sir Peter Cosgrove, Governor General of Australia and himself a Vietnam Veteran. All of us stood to attention for the ode, the Last Post, a minute's silence and the benediction. Following this ceremony, the coffins were placed in the hearses and draped with the Australian flag, ready for their trip to Parramatta. The Veteran cohort present then lined the roadside and paid their last respects as the extended cortege passed.

All in all, it was a very emotional event, with the added pathos of the fifty year delay involved.

The Memorial Service program lists Tom as Private Checkley. This error of rank was drawn to the attention of War Graves, both verbally at the time and then via e-mail. A subsequent phone call clarified that Tom will be buried at Buxton in the Midlands of England, the town where he was born, and which is located approximately between Manchester and Sheffield east-west, and well north of London. Any outstanding medals that Tom is entitled to, will be presented to the family.

I recommend that all readers look at YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTGVxiBwZSk> for some feeling of the Ramp Ceremony activities.

Allen Morley

George Lane – "It brought a tear to my eye. The whole Ceremony was very professionally done. I can say now Tom is home. My thanks to Russ Hamsey it was an honour to share this moment with you, many thanks. 'Pioneer' George Lane."

Grahame Dignam supplied the following notice from the VA Minister ...

"A privilege to be present for the Ceremony and very moving especially for those "Pioneer's" present. Grahame."

The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC
Minister for Defence Materiel
and
THE HON MARISE PAYNE MP
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

2 June 2016

Repatriation of Australians will help bring closure

Today's repatriation of 33 Australians, including 25 servicemen and eight dependants, will help bring closure to their families and the country, said Minister for Defence Marise Payne and Minister for Veterans' Affairs Dan Tehan. Aircraft bearing the returning Australians from the Terendak Military Cemetery in Malaysia and the Kranji Cemetery in Singapore are due to land at the RAAF Base Richmond in Sydney today at about 10.30am.

Minister Payne said the Australians would be welcomed home in a military repatriation ceremony followed by a memorial service for families attended by His Excellency the Governor-General Peter Cosgrove, friends and former colleagues.

"Today's ceremony is an opportunity to commemorate the sacrifice of the men and women who serve in our armed forces and the families who support them," Minister Payne said.

"For the families of those whose loved ones are returning to them and the veterans and mates who served alongside them, I hope today will bring some solace and closure."

Minister Tehan said 22 soldiers killed in the Vietnam War were among the returning Australians.

"We owe the same debt to our Vietnam veterans that we owe to every Australian who fights in our name," Minister Tehan said.

"As a country we could have done more to honour that debt to our Vietnam veterans and today's repatriation is a chance to right that historical wrong.

"I would like to take this opportunity to record my thanks and the gratitude of the Australian Government to the men and women who served our country in Vietnam."

At the conclusion of the memorial service, 33 hearses bearing the returning Australians will depart RAAF Base Richmond at 12:15pm. The procession will travel via Church Street - George Street - Smith Street - Station Street - Parkes Street and arrive at Parramatta CBD at around 12:45pm.

The public is invited to view the procession and pay their respects along the route and they should be in position by 12:30pm. Motorists using these roads at that time are asked for patience if they experience some delays.

Reinterment services will then take place in every State and Territory, except Tasmania, over the following weeks, in accordance with the families' wishes.

Ernie Newbold – 'G'day Russ and Paul, During the ceremony the tune that the Piper and the band were playing was familiar to me but I couldn't put a name to it.

Later while driving home it came to me: the tune is called "Going Home" and is based on the Largo from Dvorak's 9th Symphony also known as the "New World Symphony". Use the following link to hear more -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od_nVR67H-k Regards, Ernie."

...Ernie returns with more – "G'day again, another piece that conveys the feeling of the ceremony really well.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-06-02/repatriation-ceremony-vietnam-malaysia-service-personnel/7469362>

This one is from the ABC News and when you see Maj. Hamsey saluting you'll notice the lovely lady standing next to him. That is Marg. Mason, Ron's wife. Regards, Ernie."

Ed – Ernie you do us proud – they are both very soul searching pieces to watch and listen to. It reaches into the heart.

Barry Guzder sent this response in from a shared email – "Good to have all our blokes back where they belong.

Barry Guzder"

Russell Hamsey sent this email after the service at Richmond Air Base –

"Ernie: Thank you for the links to the coverage.

Gentlemen: This occasion is now one of the personal highlights in my service. I was overwhelmed by the way people handled the ceremony, it was certainly done with the greatest of care and dignity. I felt very privileged to be there with our vets and remain, as ever, in awe of you folks. The dedication to your mates continually reminds of the very best of this business. Standing there with you watching Tom Checkley and the others returning home also reminded me of the worst of this business.

I urge you to remember that not everyone will feel the way we do and that grief can often manifest in the strangest ways. All we can do is our best to respect those left behind and honour our fallen, wherever they lay.

I spoke to a gentleman from War Graves late yesterday and he confirmed that Tom Checkley is headed for the UK. He assured me that Tom would be well looked after by the funeral home in Sydney but really wasn't able to offer much more information. I have asked the RSM to see if he can get more information on Tom's journey to the UK and the follow-on arrangements but as DVA is handling the entire situation, I don't expect to hear more.

I would expect DVA to work with the family in the UK over funeral arrangements and our Defence and Military Attaché staff will be present (if the family so wishes) at the funeral.

Take care

Russ Hamsey

RW HAMSEY,

MAJ, S7 (Trg and Stds), 20 STA Regt, Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, QLD

Where Tom is remembered at Enoggera – there is a plaque remembering Tom – Russ Hamsey explains

"Paul: the plaque photo –

"It is fixed to one of the support pillars in the Checkley Training Area. The area is that big pergola behind the MENZ Club where we had the 131 ceremony BBQ.

Hope that helps mate, Russ Hamsey"





Tom's plaque and a view through to the Menz Club



...then Ed had to add this email response from Russ as I think Tom would get a kick out of what the area's possible main purpose was designed for... "resilience"-

"Paul:

I will work on the photos. The "Training Area" was just the excuse to get the place built. It is used for regimental resilience activities designed to strengthen the esprit de corps of the unit. In other words, we gather weekly for inspiring words by the leadership and to ensure that exposure to the outdoors does not dehydrate us too much, we provide beverages from the MENZ Club. We review our sports accomplishments after weekly regt sports. Finally, we celebrate the service of our soldiers by gathering the regt to farewell those departing the regt.

As you would expect, intensive, tough training.

Russ Hamsey"

Then from the VVA website the following was extracted -

Australian Vietnam Veterans Buried in Malaysia and Singapore (prior to Repatriation)

24 casualties of the Vietnam War are buried in the cemetery of the Terendak Garrison at Malacca, in Malaysia. This garrison was manned at the time by the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, which included a number of Australian units.

They are:

Number	Rank	Name	Age
2786017	Private	Dal E. Abbot	21
2784699	Private	Norman G. Allen	21
2788583	Private	Gary A. Archer	22
41400	Major	Peter J. Badcoe VC	33
215349	Lieutenant	Robert Birse	23
213151	Corporal	Robert W. Bowtell	33
14208	Sergeant	Ronald T. Carroll	31
311534	Gunner	Thomas W. Checkley	28
215215	Private	Christopher Clark	20
214479	Private	Ronald E. Field	22
310089	Warrant Officer Two	John Garrigan	40
43593	Warrant Officer Two	Maxwell P. Hanley MM	31
40774	Corporal	Reginald H. Hillier	26
3786634	Trooper	Tony Holland	21
215217	Private	Neville W. Horne	19
39510	2nd Lieutenant	Allan D. Jellie	22
26182	Warrant Officer Two	Ronald V. Lees	37
2784043	Corporal	John G.S. Pearce	22
42352	Warrant Officer Two	Thomas D. Phillips	38
212612	Lance Corporal	Thomas Ross	25
3410295	Lance Corporal	Arthur Ruduss	29
36205	Gunner	Thomas Simpson	27
37003	Corporal	Francis J. Smith	25
213780	Private	Mervyn A.F. Wilson	29

NB: Not all the Servicemen were repatriated.

. **The Australian War Memorial (AWM) collection** – this is a continuation of the collection that was forwarded by Ernie Newbold from the AWM Collection. The description is below the photo. We'll add more of these edition by edition.



ID Number: ERR/68/0811/VN

Maker and date: Errington, William Alexander (Bill) 1968

Nui Dat, South Vietnam. 1968-09-02. Sergeant Brian Rudduck of Holsworthy, NSW (left), a member of the 131st Divisional Locating Battery, explains the intricacies of an enemy aiming device which was captured by Australian troops, to Major Graham Allinson of Edithvale, Vic, a member of the 15th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery (RAA), whose headquarters are at Dandenong, Victoria. Major Allison is the commander of the Battery based at Frankston, Victoria.

. **Rieny Nieuwenhoff** gives an update on the Vietnam Veterans Avenue of Honour in Geelong –

"Hi Dicko,

Stage 2 of the Restoration of the Vietnam Veterans Avenue of Honour was officially opened by the State Minister for Veterans John Eren MP on Friday 27th May. The Memorial Park contains a large memorial block, curved walkway with inscribed pavers and the Roll of Honour. Among the pavers is the 131 paver, so Locators will be remembered for all time in Geelong. We had a crowd of over 200 attend the opening. This Memorial Park is located within the Vietnam Veterans Avenue of Honour, containing 134 iron bark trees and signs at the north and south entrances. We believe it is the only Avenue of Honour dedicated to Vietnam Veterans in Victoria. Rieny"



Mail Call...

Joe Librizzi keeps a conversation alive by getting back with a follow up to this following item in April's *Eyes & Ears*...

"Perth – John Lochore sends his locrep from Indian Ocean side – "When you meet Joe Librizzi he always has lots of mates as well.

Before the march here in Perth we had Mal Johnson (Joe's friend from Sigs), Joe, John Lochore, and two ladies who way back were in one of the Entertainment troupes that performed at Nui Dat. One was a go-go dancer and one was a singer. In the parade they held the ropes at the sides of the Vietnam Vets banner."



...then a follow up email from Ed – "Joe, Many thanks for the emails and photos.

To avoid confusion (hopefully) I am going to respond to the emails separately as they involve the two "girls".

Ok the one in blue is Helen McMillan and the other must be Robyn?

Did you or the blokes know either of them before this ANZAC Day?

I want to run this connection with meeting with you blokes, the photo in an edition of *Eyes & Ears*.

Be back soon. Paul'

...then following communication starts...

from Joe – "Hi Paul, Yes correct with the names, I introduced Robyn and Helen to John this Anzac day. I had known them for a few years, met them at previous Anzac day and at AFL Anzac day commemorations, very nice ladies. If I can help with anything just let me know. Cheers Joe'

Then, First from Robyn

"Hello again Joe,

I was in Vietnam for about 6 months from June 1970 doing about 3 shows/day.

The name of our show was "Pinky & Lee Revue".

We did quite a few for the Yanks in such places as Saigon, Danang, Chulai, Anhoa, Phubai, Hue, China Beach, Duc Pho, Quang Tri, Anh Ke, Kontum, Pleiku, Ban Ma Thouet, Nah Trang, but did some for the Aussies in Camranh Bay - Navy/Air Force/Army.

Sorry I don't know how to scan my old photos but I can post you copies of photos by mail.

Don't know Helen's email but I know her phone number. Cheers, Robyn'

Then here comes one from Helen –

"Hi Joe

Sorry to have taken so long. Noisy plane hurt my ear-drums at Tan Son Nhat airport.



Speaking to guys in hospitals in Vietnam.



I was sent up by Australian Forces Overseas Fund (AFOF) to entertain all allied troops and talk about home with pr work too. I sang for Aussies, Yanks etc all over South Vietnam. It was hot! Hot! Hot! Aussies were highly regarded by the Americans and I was speaker of the month at a lot of places when I came back and told them that the Aussies stood twenty-foot tall in Vietnam. I'll never forget that! kind regards, Helen"

...Helen continues with another email... "O.k. Paul. I was asked by the Australian Forces Overseas Fund to go to Vietnam in '69. I was a professional singer/actress in Western Australia. My job was to sing at a lot of places and hospitals in Vietnam and also to talk to our boys about "back home" things like footy etc. The only other professional in my group was Eddy Storm. I enjoyed talking in the hospitals, talking to Aussies and Yanks. I sang in Nui Dat, and spent time in Bien Hoa province. There were Aussies attached to the Yanks there. There were some hilarious episodes I will always

remember. There was one occasion I can recall, where I had to do a concert for some very high-brow American four-star generals. Two of our boys travelled half-way across Vietnam and told the Yanks that they were close friends of mine so they got front-row seats. I greeted them like long-lost rellies but in truth I hadn't seen them before. Helen"



. Grahame Dignam sent in the following for all of us to go to the 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition (20STA) Facebook to have a look at some familiar faces –
For all you Facebook users, 20th STA can be found at - <https://www.facebook.com/20th-Surveillance-And-Target-Acquisition-Regiment-1146627815368184/>

In the past there has been only limited use of Facebook but in the future Major Russ Hamsey is keen to foster it as a means of informing and linking current and past members of the Regiment.

Consequently, after our very successful and sociable 3 days in Brisbane, they have uploaded many photos of the radar handover & plaque unveiling and the Dawn Service & Gunfire breakfast at the Regiment. So become a "friend" to support, and to follow what our "decedents" locators are doing.

. Allen Morley followed up on emails from earlier this month regarding some conjecture to reductions etc in benefits relating to DVA White/Gold cards etc. He directed his concerns to his local federal member and received the following response -

"Dear Mr Morley

Thanks for your email in relation to the government's budget measures in relation to DVA health card arrangements. I have raised your concerns with the health minister and sadly there appears to be some incorrect information that has been circulated to veterans organisations designed to mislead the community.

The facts are as follows:

There is no gap payment able to be charged for people using DVA health cards and there is no change to this arrangement.

Consistent with previous budget decisions the extension of the Medicare indexation freeze does apply to DVA funded medical and optometry services.

DVA fees for medical services are significantly higher than rebates available under Medicare.

It should be noted that DVA also provides a broader range of services than are available through Medicare.

DVA medical fees will continue to represent the full payment to the provider with no additional charges to the cardholder and consequently there is no change to the existing arrangements where health providers agree to provide DVA services.

Whilst past Medicare indexation pauses have applied to DVA dental and allied health services the further pause announced in the 2016-17 budget does not.

I hope that this information alleviates your concerns.

Regards

Trent

Trent Zimmerman MP

Member for North Sydney”

Ed – well done Allen.

Allen Morley with a few moments to spare – possibly at the airport – noted the following – “Hi Paul, I have just returned from a family visit to NZ. While reading the *NZ Herald*, I came across this advert. My view was that it could be of interest to our readers.

My memory is fading a bit but I do not recall a similar advert in local newspapers. Allen”

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST



New Zealand
DEFENCE FORCE
To Open Eyes D. Ambrose
NAVY NZARMY AIRFORCE

50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War – 2016

Commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War will be held in Wellington and Canberra, Australia on 18 August 2016.

Thirty-five New Zealand Vietnam veterans selected in a ballot will travel to Canberra, to participate in commemorations at the Vietnam Forces Memorial, Anzac Parade on 18 August. Veterans selected to participate will travel to and from Canberra with support from the New Zealand Defence Force.

Thirty veterans will be selected from a general veterans category and five veterans who served with 161 Battery in Vietnam will be selected from a separate category in the ballot.

To be eligible to travel to Canberra for the commemorations, veterans must have served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 (in either the civilian medical team or the New Zealand Armed Forces), have qualified for the relevant Vietnam medallic recognition, and be cleared by their GP for overseas travel.

To be eligible for the 161 Battery category, veterans must also have been posted or attached to 161 Battery on 18 August 1966 and have served at the gun line during the Battle of Long Tan.

To register your interest, please email commemorations@nzdf.mil.nz to request a registration form. Postal enquiries can be sent to:

Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemorations
c/o Heritage, Commemorations & Protocol Group
Headquarters New Zealand Defence Force
Freyberg House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington 6011

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 24 JUNE 2016.

The New Zealand Herald | Wednesday, June 15, 2016

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

Now here's the official information from the Australian War Memorial and the Great Hall Reception at Parliament House...



Canberra Honours Vietnam Veterans

The ACT and Districts Vietnam Veterans have collaborated with the Federal and ACT Governments, Australian War Memorial (AWM), Ainslie Football Club and Southern Cross Club to honour Vietnam Veterans. On this 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan the Vietnam Veterans' Remembrance Day program of events for August 16th to 19th is listed below:

PROJECTIONS (AWM). Continual images from the Vietnam War will be projected onto the various façades of the Australian War Memorial which will include key theatres of the war and names and ages of the 521 KIAs resulting from the total engagement and which includes the 18 KIAs from the Battle of Long Tan.

HALL OF MEMORY (AWM) Wednesday 17th August 4pm, John Schumann singing "I was only 19" in Hall of Memory. Ref: www.awm.gov.au for expressions of interest, attendance limited to 100.

LAST POST CEREMONY (AWM) Wednesday 17th August 4.55 pm, the story of Private Ken Gant will be read; also "I was only 19", supported by Australia's Federation Guard.

VIETNAM VALE (AWM) Thursday 18th August 5.30 am. The Memorial's Commemorative Area will open and the names of the 521 people on the Vietnam War Roll of Honour will be read. Visitors may like to place a poppy on the Roll of Honour.

RECEPTION at Great Hall Parliament House on Wednesday 17th August 6.30pm. The Australian Government will be issuing invitations to this event. If you wish to attend, an expression of interest is required stating name, address, email, phone contacts for each attendee. There are limited invitations available so get in early by emailing vietvetsday@gmail.com with required details.

STAND-TO SERVICE (AWM) Thursday 18th August 7 am. A "stand-to" Service will be held at the Stone of Remembrance in front of the Australian War Memorial.

BREAKFAST in the PARK at Reid Oval. Thursday 18th August 7.30am. Courtesy ACT Government and prepared by Lions Club.

VIETNAM VETERANS' REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE Thursday 18th August 10am at the Australian Vietnam Forces Memorial on ANZAC Parade-. Hosted by the ACT and Districts Vietnam Veterans. The service will include a flyover of familiar aircraft. Seats must be taken up by 9:30am ready for official arrivals.

CAMERADERIE AFTERNOON Thursday 18th August 12.00pm at Ainslie Football Club. Food and drinks available. Check the update for details of this event on the website. www.waa.org.au/canberra-programofevents.docx

LAST POST CEREMONY. Thursday 18th August 4.55 pm at AWM. The Last Post Ceremony will feature the story of Lieutenant Gordon Sharp.

MUSIC by the LAKE. Friday 19th August 12pm to 3pm on the lawns at Southern Cross Yacht Club. Wind down with the local band "Old 45" playing Vietnam era rock and roll music. Food and drinks available. Marquee will be available if weather is inclement.

For updated information refer website: www.waa.org.au or email vietvetsday@gmail.com.

See also: <https://www.awm.gov.au/events/honouring-vietnam-veterans/>

Here's the 131 Locators Association interaction with the above events...
First up have a look below and go to the website as instructed...

Are you serious all I've got to do is click on the following Association website link:
<http://www.131locators.org.au/news-events/notice-board.html>
and I can win a break at Netanya in Noosa and maybe give a fellow Locator a chance to get accommodation at the Long Tan Anniversary events.

Hey I'd better get to the website!

Don't wait the winner will be drawn on 19th July – you'll be advised by email.



...then here's the follow-on with the Locator activities...



August 2016 in Canberra – Vietnam Veteran's Day

Not to be missed

**50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan
and**

Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day Service.

The proposed Agenda for the 131 Locators is a little more casual and is:

- Arrive on 16th /17th August.
- Wednesday 17th - 1200 Hrs Committee meeting at the Pavilion on Northbourne
- Wednesday 17th - PM Reception and Dinner in the Great Hall Parliament House (Nominated reps ONLY) – medals to be worn
- Wednesday 17th - PM others - Camaraderie at Ainslie Football Club or other TBA
- Thursday 18th - 1000 Hrs Remembrance Service at the Vietnam Vets War Memorial Anzac Parade Plus medals
- Thursday 18th - Afternoon- 1200 Hrs Ainslie Football Club Drinks if you wish
- Thursday 18th - 1655Hrs AWM Last Post
- Thursday 18th - 1900 for 1930rs 50th Anniversary Dinner at Pavilion on Northbourne
- Friday 18th – Breakfast free time / check out etc.

Now we need to know your intentions so as we can organize numbers etc...

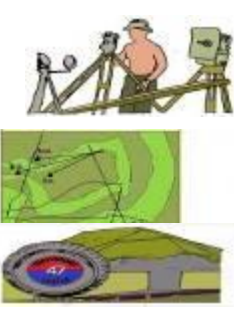
RSVP by 2nd August, 2016

direct to: Grahame Dignam – **Secretary / Treasurer** sectreas131locators@gmail.com
131 Locators Association Inc. Website http://www.131locators.org.au/about/131_locators.html

A \$50 deposit per person is required and 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 payable to: 131 Locators Association Inc
Mail to: Secretary/Treasurer, 131Locators Association, 8 Darling St. Abbotsbury NSW 2176



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>

It's great to be able to welcome two more new members to the Association - **Philip Mulgrew** 68-69 Vet and **Neville Davis** '71 Vet.

Plus, it's an appropriate time to back up a reminder email sent for membership renewals.

Regards, Grahame Dignam. 131 Locators Association Treasurer/Secretary.

Presidential Perambulations

In the last lap of the 2016 Federal Election, June has proven to be a month of interest and intrigue, as well as one of reflection.

As explained in a story above, a group of his 131 contemporaries welcomed Gunner Thomas William Checkley home to Australia, albeit only briefly. That is where the intrigue aspect came in. The media screamed, 'shame' against the Prime Minister's and Leader of the Opposition's decision not to attend the ramp ceremony at Richmond Airforce Base to welcome home those, including Vietnam Veterans, being repatriated from Malaysia and Singapore.

It has become standard practice for these two to attend the funeral service of any Australian Servicemen KIA in Iraq and Afghanistan, thus politicising the solemn occasions. Hence, the media criticises anew because they were not at Richmond. The media seem to ignore however, that the Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove, represented the people of Australia. He is a Vietnam Veteran and therefore, in my personal view was exactly the right one to officiate at the ceremony.

And Sir Peter demonstrated that he is a man of the people. As the hearses prepared for their convoy to Parramatta, he crossed the road to join the Veterans paying their respects and chatted with some of his former soldiers and others in the Veteran crowd. Reflection over 50 years did not in any way tarnish the memories shared by those at Richmond.

I mean no disrespect to those repatriates nor the Iraq and Afghanistan KIAs, but it annoys me personally to see politicians seeking to bask in reflected glory. I believe the media got it wrong in this case whilst War Graves Commission from DVA got it right.

The interest is, more correctly perhaps, lack of interest. The polls move one way, then the other, then back again etc etc. The voters are pretty sick of it all and will tell their own story on July 2nd, about the time you are reading this edition of *Eyes and Ears*.

Allen

Pertinent Points – extracted from the 131 Locators Association Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 21st June, 2016 at 1100hrs...

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

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 19th July, 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 more than welcome, in fact the more the merrier or more meaningful.

Recent Correspondence (uncirculated) included:

An email from **John Vickary** who contacted an acquaintance in the Accor group and explained our **50th Anniversary Battle of Long Tan** project to them and our desire to gather Vets, who through distance etc., may not be able to attend this milestone event.

He requested some type of assistance for the event. The **Accor group** responded magnificently with an offer of 5

50 Years
April 1966 - April 2016



The Memories Remain
1966 - 1971

rooms at the **Mercure Canberra** which includes Breakfasts with guests arriving 17th and departing Saturday 20th August.

The committee responded with warm appreciation for the generous offer and will communicate directly with them expressing our gratitude.

Presidents report.

Allen advised that

He had accompanied George Lane, Ged Carroll, Ron Mason and Merv Nairn, of the 131 Div Loc Bty 1966 Pioneer group along with Ern Newbold, G Dignam and 20STA Maj Russell Hamsey and Mrs Margaret Mason to Richmond airbase for the Welcome Home ramp ceremony on 2 June. We were present to honour the memory of Gnr Tom Checkley who died in SVN in 1966 and whose remains were being repatriated to the UK via Sydney.

He had written to the DVA Grants office who confirmed that a bulk amount had been paid in May to the Granville office of VVP&PAA. He then wrote to that ESO requesting that our portion of the payment be passed on to our account ASAP. We are waiting for the funds to arrive in our Account.

Allen advised that he had been notified that NZ veterans of SVN had been invited to attend 50th anniversary Celebrations in Canberra.

Allen also passed on a Big "Thank You" to the Editor of our newsletter, Paul Dickson, for the consistent high quality and newsy items included in every edition that hits your screen each month (even if somewhat late at times). A recognition of the time and effort that goes into the preparation and presentation is very much appreciated by all the Locator community.

Arrangements for 50th Anniversary Battle of Long Tan event Canberra August 2016

. A list of guests will be compiled and invitations extended to join us for the occasion.

. A list of events published by the AWM and Canberra Vietnam Veterans and the 131 Locators Association are attached to these Minutes. A copy will also be placed on the Events tab on the website and also will appear in the next Eyes & Ears.

. The guessing Competition is still open for purchase and nomination for "a vet that might attend." **Closes Midnight 18 July 2016 drawn at 19th July meeting.**

. The August General meeting will be held on the 17th in Canberra where we expect a bumper crowd and **no one will be elected to anything**

General Business

Allen raised the matter of name tags for the committee to be worn at official functions. The plan was adopted and referred to our design sub-committee, Nick Proskurin and Ern Newbold to develop a suitable concept.

Web activity - 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...July –

JULY	Name	Regt No	YOB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	STEPHEN FOWLER	217186	1948	16 09 1968	17 09 1969	
2	PETER O'DONNELL Sgt.	213115	1941	24 03 1970	05 11 1970	
3	BRUCE FOWLER	2795238	1949	16 12 1970	29 07 1971	
4	GEORGE WEARN Capt.	2251140	1937	05 08 1968	20 08 1968	133 Div Loc CMF
7	PETER JOSCELYNE	2792023	1945	03 06 1970	17 12 1970	
10	BILL FINLAY	37818	1944	20 05 1966	01 05 1967	
10	ROBERT PELHAM	55342	1949	16 11 1968	19 11 1969	
10	REX ARNOLD	424096	1949	16 12 1970	29 05 1971	
	" "			29 05 1971	16 09 1971	Ind 161 Recce Flt.
11	JOHN JAGGARD	4721862	1949	03 03 1971	02 08 1971	131
	" "			02 08 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
12	NEVILLE ATKINSON	1733449	1947	08 11 1968	05 11 1969	† 14.12.96
13	DEREK GRIFFITHS					† 02.04.05
13	ALASDAIR GOUGH	2105130	1947	27 03 1970	04 03 1971	
14	EDMOND DOUST Sgt.	53111	1939	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	† 26.12.14
14	FREDERICK KRUIMINK	6708867	1945	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
15	IAN EARLE	3166824	1951	19 08 1970	10 12 1970	131 / 4 Fd Regt.
	" "			11 12 1970	23 06 1971	33 Dental Unit
16	GEORGE ADDISON WO2	2410040	1930	16 04 1969	16 04 1970	† 27.12.12
18	KEITH AYLIFFE Sgt.	217354	1941	18 12 1967	03 12 1968	131
	" "			08 07 1971	24 07 1971	HQ AFV
18	ALAISTAIR McLEAN	312524	1947	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	

18	JOE KOCKA	1202703	1951	20 08 1970	29 07 1971	
19	MAXWELL McPHERSON	3795560	1947	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	
21	GRAHAM WILLIAMS	2789698	1947	03 06 1969	25 03 1970	
21	WILLIAM SLAPE	44464	1950	22 12 1969	17 12 1970	† 12.05.12
21	WILHELMUS Van ZETTEN	3794919	1947	17 03 1970	17 12 1970	
21	PETER SUMMERS	3796803	1948	09 11 1970	09 06 1971	
22	JOHN HOMER	5717596	1949	17 03 1971	02 08 1971	131
	" "			02 08 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
23	DAVID DODD	2790139	1947	03 06 1969	04 06 1970	
25	WILLIAM DOYLE	4719912	1947	17 12 1968	04 01 1969	4 Fd REGT
	" "			05 01 1969	28 11 1969	131 † 05.09.78
25	JOHN SMITH	610231	1949	16 11 1968	12 11 1969	
25	RALPH PEARCE	2794949	1949	17 03 1971	04 08 1971	131
	" "			04 08 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
28	MALCOLM MUSGRAVE	214359	1943	03 06 1969	04 06 1970	
29	RICHARD EDWARDS	218595	1949	03 06 1970	14 05 1971	
30	KEITH HOLLOWAY	15851	1943	20 05 1966	10 10 1966	

Ed – 9 blokes not highlighted still isn't a great result! Surely with a bit of effort we can find a few more of our Locator mates?

. Located...

Fred Kruimink – was Located by Grahame Dignam via the old ode' cologne, and found out that he's good for his age. Fred's another one we can tick off the "whites" in the Birthday List. We've now less than 200 blokes to Locate. 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.

. Locator Profiles – we've received 131 and we've sent out 131.

Ed – I'm over it, it's 50 years since the **Pioneers** lobbed into SVN and out of ALL of us who were around at the time and later we've **ONLY** got 131 Profiles archived. **Bloody hell! We're getting older fellas and I'm not going to be doing this forever. So I'm going to start sending out the blanks that I have (mind you I have sent them out earlier) – you blokes know who you are so how about responding plus anyone else??**



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](http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/contacts_page) for details: <http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/> <http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/operations/coburg.html>

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield

...notes taken from the LS & TAA website – 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



www.artilleryhistory.org



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



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

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE - The Dept of Veteran's Affairs has launched a new mental health initiative to assist veteran's experiencing the affects of mental illness and their families. Providing information and fact sheets about understanding mental illness, links and contact information for accessing support, and online resources for health professionals, this website focuses on helping veterans identify early warning signs of mental illness to effectively manage their mental illness and seek treatment.

For more info or to access, please visit www.at-ease.dva.gov.au

. 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](http://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com)



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association - <http://www.mzaa.org.nz/>

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