

THE EYES and EARS

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Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA

**Unit Citation for Gallantry (UCG) awarded to the Detachment and those who served at
The Battles of Coral/Balmoral in South Vietnam, 1968**

2019 - 53 YEARS AND THE DETACHMENT 131 SPIRIT LIVES ON 1966 - 1971



. A Question for discussion –

“How did the Detachment change its activities over time in SVN?”

Now the following is a very descriptive answer to part of that question...



Microphone Shelter

We started this subject a couple of months back in *Eyes & Ears* and it has developed with some great responses, including personal ones and this month we feature a response from **Kevin Browning** who, by this account, gives us a detailed, on hand, reflection as to the **Sound Ranging** activity during his time in Nui Dat –

“Hello Paul,

Before getting onto your question about sound ranging your readers might be interested in looking at the following link which gives a rather simple explanation of its development and use during

WW1. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/sound-ranging-explained> **Ed** – this link is really worth a look at.

Now to our use of it in Vietnam. When I arrived in mid-September 1968 the command post bunker had been dug and nearly completed but the equipment was still to be installed. **Geoff Jebb** was the resident expert on the equipment but I do not know how much training those already there had received. Myself and those that would have arrived shortly before me, **Brian Smyth** and possibly **Terry Fox**, and those that arrived before the end of 1968 would have received next to no training on Sound Ranging. 131 had arranged for a retired WO2 to come in on his Emergency Reserve Training commitment, two weeks, to train us but there was no equipment in the unit and for the majority of his time he spent it chasing equipment. 130 Gun Locating Battery, a CMF unit, were Sound Ranging people and he needed to borrow the gear from them. By the time, he had the necessary gear his time was up. I do not recall whether we received one or possibly two days training but certainly no more. With this much training, I could say I was able to recognise the No 5 Sound Ranging Equipment at three paces by the way the WO2 **Rusty Priest** who was to become the NSW President of the RSL in the 80/90s.

On arrival in Vietnam I was accommodated in the Survey lines in the Engineers area. In very late October or early November the Surveyors moved to new lines behind the Detachments HQ/Q Store near the RHQ Q Store. Two tin huts each with two rooms that accommodated four per room. Included were two signallers but I do not think our driver lived there. On that point, I could be corrected. At this time, the equipment was in place and the six microphones were being connected to the main signals communications lines or direct line to the CP. Because of the wet conditions, during the wet season, the microphones were mounted above ground and screens erected over them to limit the interference from wind.

In the Command Post the plotting boards had to be constructed and this required precision and special tools. Plus, it needed instruction from Geoff. Power to the system was by batteries and they were bloody big ones. These powered not only the CP equipment but also the microphones. Manning of sound ranging became the responsibility of the Surveyors which might be seen as having two jobs but it also meant additional work for the Listening Post boys as it removed the Surveyors from assisting them. Although I must say several Surveyors found themselves transferred to the LPs for periods of time. Back to Sound Ranging. The Surveyors provided three shifts. The sound ranging was manned between 7 pm and 7 am, shift 1 was 7pm to 1 am and shift 2 was 1am to 7 am, third shift had the night off. Next night 3rd shift mounted at 7pm, 1st shift at 1 am and 2nd shift had night off and so it went for the next 2 years. Survey still had to be done so it wasn't a simple arrangement. In addition, the two signallers had the responsibility for repairing the lines to the microphones and replacing the grids that made the microphone work. I know our Sigs never enjoyed the experiences of the repairs, moving around Nui Dat at night, especially where a couple of the microphones were placed, was not a great experience.

If it was necessary to operate the sound ranging this would happen by LP A on Nui Dat Hill reporting 'Shot, Shot, Shot' at which time one of us designated for the time was 'alert' to switch on the recorder. Because of the way, the base was laid out it also meant we seldom (that is never) got the first round. Reading the recorded record was something we learnt as time went on. The record looked like the tape you got from the heart monitors. We knew how to read it but had to learn what to look for. Mortars were the main sound and they produced a small wave on the recorder. Rockets were easy to spot, they simply became a disturbance on each microphone line and continued. During the Battle of Binh Ba three rockets were fired at Nui Dat and exactly 60 minutes later another three. A B52 strike made for a busy record (film). We received Met messages every two hours and corrections to readings had to be calculated. In between time during the 6-hour shift letters home occupied our time, except the one waiting for the signal from the LP.



Three of four plotting boards.



No 5 Sound ranging Equipment - Power Supply, Lines Test Unit, Amplifier, Recorder

This photo shows the location of each microphone



Regards, Kev"

. **A Question for discussion** – “How did the Detachment change its activities over time in SVN?” – this section will continue next month in *Eyes & Ears* when we pick up the continuing thread with **Sensor Programme**. There's quite a bit already in the fuel tank.

Just a note with regards to the sensor Programme article **Ed** received an email from **Eddie Tricker** with regards to the photo showing the Original Australian Unattended Ground Sensor/Sensor Course Participants – he has been informed that the photo was taken by **Graham Smith** who also had attended the course.

...and he added...

The photo you have published, has since had one correction made to its caption. That is, the caption has one error in it.

Back row, left hand, third person in, is currently shown as Cpl John Arnold, (from one of my sources). Subsequent and following research corrected this person's name to **Cpl John Anderson**. John Anderson was subsequently promoted to Temporary Sergeant; and worked in HQ 1ATF in Intelligence, (NRVV)

...see the correction below...

Cpl John Anderson



*Original Australian Unattended Ground Sensor / Sensor Course Participants - ARVN Signals School, Vung Tau.
Back-Standing-Lto R:Pfc Ryder, USA; Pfc Rosenfeldt, USA; Cpl John Anderson; Captain Norm Gomm; Gnr Stuart Telford,
Bombardier Albert Jacka; Gnr John Lucas; Gnr Laurie Mion; Major Cooper, USA; Gnr Warren Jaenke;
Frontrow squatting-L to R:Pfc Patterson, USA; Gnr Geoff Carthew; Sgt John Brewer; L/Bombardier Jeff Bassard;
Gnr Gary Navas; L/Bombardier Richard Edwards; Sergeant, 1st Class Oliveri, USA. Taken 10/11 July 1970 - Vung Tau.*

. The “Lost Locator Project”

Ed – The Project continues on relentlessly so, we need to be vigilant and keep our minds active as who knows who, where and how we might stumble on, discover someone etc be it by accident but even more so by design. Paul

Get in touch via 131eyesandears@gmail.com

. The “Detachment Album Project” – This project is sponsored by the 131 Locators Association and is in need of some photographic and by-line input from our members/Readers.



. **Oddities** – **Ed** – I continue on relentlessly with my ramblings. If we were sitting somewhere and you raised the usual question I get asked – “What brought you here?” - meaning where I now live. It begs from me another question which follows on from that as to if you’d asked me, let’s say, about 10 years ago “Would you have thought that you’d be living here and built a house etc?” I may have responded with “I don’t think so”. Well, anyway here we are (Helen and I) living in a house that we had built. Let me take you back a couple of steps – we’d been living here for a few years, renting etc. We stumbled on a “property” for sale, let me explain the inverted commas as the “property” was basically a garage converted into a Deli with everything (unseen from the street) a very derelict property. Anyway, through a great Mexican contact (real estate agent and a Senor Fixit/Arrange-it person, maybe one day I’ll explain how we got our Mexican drivers licences!) we made sure we could have a garage and do a knock-down/re-build and made an offer that the owners, eventually, couldn’t refuse. So, some 18 months later the lot had been cleared and our house built. Now, the lot is on a fairly busy drag, but it’s walking distance from everywhere

downtown/Centro – we love it. The lot cost us about \$AU220k and the demolition/construction about \$AU410k, so all up about \$AU630k. Today, it would possibly sell for about \$AU1.1mil. However, to see it built by hand – concrete and steel (very contemporary) – blokes carrying bricks, buckets of concrete (yes, they had a cement mixer, but we couldn't have concrete delivered and pumped because of the location and supplies being delivered and debris removal had to be done basically at night). It had me fascinated and slightly on edge to see blokes up and down wooden planks etc – I spent a lot of time on-site. So, we have a lot size of 210sq mts and a house size of approx. 525sq mts. Now, to where this is leading me (crikey, talk about a detour!) our annual rates (called land taxes over here) amount to about \$AU241, which gives us 6 rubbish pick-ups a week, street cleaning etc. Water – about \$AU7 for two months, electricity \$AU0.50 per month (we have solar), we have propane gas connected (cooking, hot water and in-floor heating for winter – we are going to slowly but surely going to convert our propane gas appliances to electric as we constantly overproduce electricity) about \$AU30 month. And on top of all of this we don't have to mow a lawn/s! So, all in all, we are not stretched for cash to live here and the coffee is really good. Hey, we also have "old fart" cards which gives us discounts for all sorts of things – ridiculous – we don't even look like Nationals!

Maybe next month I'll ramble on some more just to drive you nuts!

. Brian David Auld – Ok we follow on from last month with a few more "Memories from a Friend" –

MEMORIES from a friend:

. My Dad is cleaning out my grandmother's house (she died recently) and he brought me an old lemonade bottle. In the bottle top was a stopper with a bunch of holes in it. I knew immediately what it was, but my daughter had no idea. She thought they had tried to make it a salt shaker or something. I knew it as the bottle that sat on the end of the ironing board to 'sprinkle' clothes with because we didn't have steam irons. Man, I am old.

. How many do you remember?

- Headlight dip-switches on the floor of the car.

- Ignition switches on the dashboard.

- Trouser leg clips for bicycles without chain guards.

- Soldering irons, you heated on a gas burner. Using hand signals for cars without turn indicators.

. Older Than Dirt Quiz: Count all the ones that you remember, not the ones you were told about. Ratings at the bottom.

1. Sweet cigarettes

2. Coffee shops with juke boxes

3. Home milk delivery in glass bottles

4. Party lines on the telephone

5. Newsreels before the movie

6. TV test patterns that came on at night after the last show and were there until TV shows started again in the morning. (There were only 2 channels [if you were fortunate])

7. Peashooters

8. 33 rpm records

9. 45 RPM records

10. Hi-fi's

11. Metal ice trays with levers

12. Blue flashbulb

13. Cork popguns

14. Wash tub wringers

If you remembered 0-3 = You're still young

If you remembered 3-6 = You are getting older

If you remembered 7-10 = Don't tell your age

If you remembered 11-14 = You're positively ancient!

I must be 'positively ancient' but those memories are some of the best parts of my life.

Don't forget to pass this along! Especially to all your really old friends...I just did!



. Here's a continuing story in the series with regards to Locators' "passions" ...

This series commenced a while back now with extracting “Passions” under the guise of “Grey Nomads” and has developed into “things” that somewhat consume us outside families etc and God forbid work!
It’s just so good to discover other sides, be that “outsides” or “insides” of blokes who we begin to get to know through this sort of process.

Now this edition we’re going to see what **Paul Dickson** got up to...

“Absent Ed” – yes that’s me and yes, I did get away for a couple of weeks this month.

Travel must be in my wife’s (Helen) and my blood – we took off for a couple of weeks to India, somewhat out of the blue. Never been there before – has anyone else? Anyway, the fascination was to see some places of interest to us and get stuck into the food – all of which we did.

To keep it short – we had drivers, guides and places of interest booked and 14 days to do it in. We flew into New Delhi – saw some amazing places – highlight was the food?? We managed to visit a temple which feeds several thousand-poor people daily – amazing. I even managed to toss a few chapattis on the hot plate, not very professionally I must add.

Next was Agra – the Taj Mahal – words can’t describe it, but go early and the Agra Fort – amazing.

Bharatpur – the Keoladeo National Park – by cycle rickshaw – amazing bird sanctuary.

Ranthambhore National Park – we came here to see tigers and we did – 2 up close – “glamped” for 3 nights – wonderful experience.

Jaipur – did the Amber Fort – definitely didn’t do the “Elephant Walk”!

Varanasi – flew there, stayed in a converted Palace right on the Ganges – known for riverside cremations – absolutely another belief – very solemn. The river was amazingly clean and it is a great city and river to explore.

We then flew on to Delhi and home.

Notes: India is not for the feint-hearted, the population alone is insane (1.3 Billion) in a space of 3.3 million sq kms, I think I live in a place with a huge population, but it is about one tenth of the population and about half the space. The cow is sacred and the skill they use to miss them on the roads is frightening, not to mention the absolute traffic chaos. However, we’re vegetarians, and couldn’t believe the variety and quality of the food (no, we didn’t eat along the streets). Toss amongst all of that the colour, the smell (not so much the livestock), very friendly people and the sense of adventure – in a word – incredible. Oh, by the way, we didn’t fly through Pakistani airspace and avoided Boeing 737 Max’s.



At the Taj.



Ganges night festival and a cremation in Varanasi.



Close to a Tiger.

Here’s the next in the “Unknown” series...



“smoker”.

see Rieny Nieuwenhof’s story and photos below in “Mail” and see if you recognise the

...then here’s a response to last month’s query...

John Dellaca – not only does John know the three blokes in the original photo, but has supplied us with a more recent one of the trio - ‘Hi Paul, have attached two photos - the Vietnam photo from *Eyes and Ears* (Feb ’19) from Stan Briggs, is **Stan in centre and John Dellaca on the left and John Bayford** leaning on his shovel on the right. This was taken at FSB Coogee, May 14th 68.

The other is 50 years later at the Coral reunion in Canberra. (hardly changed at all)

Regards, John Dellaca”



Ed – as stated in my response to John – “They appear to be a little more relaxed and happier in the Canberra photo.

. Radar not on display at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum, Phillip Island...

We received an email from **John Stanford** regarding a visit to the Museum (see his full email below in “Mail Out / Mail In” below) and consequently **Grahame Dignam** put on his investigative beret and got in touch with **Phil Dressing** at the Museum -

“Hello Phil and late compliments of the New Year to you and the museum family (and the year of the pig).

We have received a note from one of our guys who passed thru the Museum a short while ago and was only able to see the Radar "STACK" but no Antenna on display.

He mentioned this to the **Ed** of our newsletter who asked me to chase up a sitrep. Out of courtesy, he intends to place a note in the next edition of the newsletter warning potential visitors that your maintenance programme is an ongoing process and that not all item are on display at all times.

If the Antennae is still in the workshop, could you please advise a suggested completion date. If it's already back in place - all is well and we will advise our readers to that effect.

Kind regards for your continued support, Grahame.”

...the response...

“Grahame. Thank you. I appreciate your email. The radar gear was displayed at the Avalon Air Show to showcase what can be done with some TLC. We also took the Kiowa to demonstrate restorative processes. The storyboard was also displayed. It is all back on display in our Museum. But the fact of the matter is that we don't have the room to display all that we have. Hopefully our new Museum will enable more of our Collection to be on show. Our strategy is to rotate displays and exhibitions providing the repeat visitor with a different and new perspective. Phil”

So, all is ok, it's just a matter of timing and the future making it all fit into place. Thanks for the note John.

From the Advocate's Desk...



Our professional Advocate's contact details: -

Peter Pioro JP - email contact: piorowp@ozemail.com.au

Ken Foster OAM JP - email contact: khfoster1@bigpond.com

Disclaimer: Please note that all correspondence submitted will be treated with the total confidentiality between the sender and our Advocates. Printed submissions and responses that may be published in *Eyes & Ears* will be completely anonymous, just used as examples of help.

Mail Call...

. Bob Billiards - "Paul.

It was at the Avalon Airshow 2019 and they had a "Drone Zone" this year, so **20 STA** got there. Now they fly small drones. Australia has the world drone racing champion for 2018, where the drone is flown using a small camera on it and the pilot uses goggles receiving a live feed from the drone and it is flown through several obstacles at high speed. The article was in the "RCM" magazine (Radio Controlled Modeller) as the Airshow for full sized aeroplanes had a "Drone Zone" where commercial and military drones were displayed.

**...the extracts from the Radio Controlled Modeller (RCM) magazine -
Inspiring the next generation, fantastic to see people thinking big.**

Friday pilot briefing for the first ever night FPV display under the Twentieth Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment awning.



Seek to Strike



View from the bleachers.



Fly under arm if you have too!

War games across the ditch -
lads. Don't let the Kiwis win





One of my other passions is Model Aircraft.

Regards, Bob.

. **Allen Morley** – on making it to the Great Wall” sent this into us – “We made it, helped with a few repairs and was amazed by the number of tourists.

...so, Hi Dicko, or should I say China Plate?

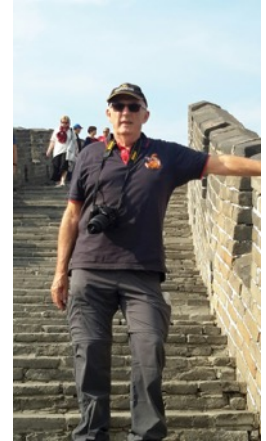
It is 0900 on a Thursday morning (I think) sitting in the bar on MV Yangzi Explorer sailing up what we know as the Yangtze River in China. The day is foggy/smoggy.

We have been to Beijing - the Wall and Palaces - Xi'an for the Terracotta Warriors and now headed for Chengdu to see the pandas in the research station. Add in Shanghai and Suzhou which all together means we have covered a lot of ground.

The engineering/structural aspects, both old and new are so impressive. The Chinese just build and construct, even out in the boonies. None of the fiddling and artificial delays we have, such as the light rail in Sydney. I guess with a population of 1.4 billion that has to be the way.

More in future E&Es if Ed allows.

Ed – We'll chase him up for some more info when we can nail him down.



. **Ron Boaler (16th Intake, SVN 1970-71)** – sent in the following with a current post-flooding report involving his own situation with regards to the floods in Townsville, then gets into, what I believe is a from the heart type of Vale message with regards to a great friend/mate of his – **Pater Sali**. I still have a lump in my throat...

“Hi Paul. Today hopefully I get a replacement for my little car that went swimming in the recent Townsville floods and outside I can hear the crashing sounds of trucks and end loaders carting away the refrigerators lounges and all the belongings that were destroyed in the filthy water. I'm doing ok but have had a few problems.

I borrowed my daughter's car to go to the QLD Disaster Relief people to apply for financial assistance as all the ATMs were not working and merchants were only taking cash. I had nowhere to cook initially and had to eat out at the few restaurants that were able to open running on generators. I now have lights and ceiling fans and one power point specifically for the fridge.

Anyway, back to my friend Peter. I miss him heaps as you could never be serious around Peter. He was his own worst enemy but he lived his life as it came with few regrets to mar his memories. **Ron and Peter**

Ed – Read this and the lump in the throat was joined by a tear, if not several in the eyes –

“The Story of Peter Sali” as related by Ron Boaler.

Peter Sali was born in Townsville to a Polish mother and Yugoslav father who had walked from Poland over the Alps down through India where they caught a boat which landed in Townsville North Queensland.

Peter's father was wanted by the Gestapo because he was a leader of the resistance and had been very successful in killing a lot of Germans. Unfortunately, he succumbed to what we know today as PTSD and disappeared never to be seen again. Peter's mother Frida who only passed away recently in Brisbane moved to Brisbane where she married

Mr Sali, an Albanian taxi driver. They had two more boys, Roy and Hassan. Peter and his brothers formed a German band called

“Kalendar Band” and played at the Brisbane German club and at Oktoberfest functions.

February 1969 saw Peter on his way to Singleton as a member of the 16th National service intake. A competent soldier Peter was not. But he was a ton of fun. Peter served in Vietnam in 1970 and 1971 where he improved



markedly with his playing of the guitar ably assisted by **Blair Sheppard**. Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery, at that time, had put together a stage group of about 36 members.

We had two bands: "The Rumpled Foreskin" – consisting of **Blair Sheppard, Peter Sali and Alasdair Gough**.

And the other called **"The Homotones"** - comprising Gordonvale surveyor **Charlie "Brown" O'Neil** and several others along with comedians and comperes **Pete "Pie" McGann** and his magic dancing board and none other than the one and only **Marcus Lee Robinson**.

These guys entertained many a unit notably 161 Recce Flight on a significant day in their history and many of us as we enjoyed a cool beer in the boozier.

On returning to Australia, **Graham Smith, Blair Sheppard and Peter** all ended up working for EMI records.

Somewhere I have photos of the very drunk Peter with his arm around a very drunk Molly Meldrum and a number of pop artists of that time.

Peter lived the life of a rock and roller drinking, smoking, smoking other stuff, doing many other things and drinking some more and there were many ladies in his life, three or four of them he married and had children with. All of Peter's ex-wives were great mates with each other and still thought he was terrific. He said to me just prior to his death "I wish I could fall in love just one more time".

For 13 years Peter and his brothers played in Japan for several months. They played mainly in the prefectures of Nagasaki, Kobe and Hiroshima and while they did play other prefectures they never played in Tokyo. Peter was a natural entertainer, he and his brothers did German slap dances, got people up to play "Edelweiss" with cowbells and played an enormous 15-foot-long Swiss horn.

Peter didn't have formal musical education like his two brothers and one day he said to Roy – "I want to learn to play the trombone!" Roy taught him several cords and as he said at Peter's funeral - "It wasn't what he played but how we played those three chords that he knew."

Once while doing the slap dance Peter misjudged, collected Hassan's head and knocked him out. They had played at various German restaurants or Bavarian restaurants around Brisbane and the Gold Coast and in the last years played at The Rocks in Sydney. They had a very good following and had put out a record or two more for their followers than to make money.

Peter said to me one day - "You know Ron, in Australia nobody knows me, but in Japan I'm a rock star. I can't have a coffee without little girls coming up and wanting my autograph and people pointing out to their friends who I am and yet, I'm only in the country for three or four months of the year. The auditoriums they played house between five and 8,000 people and they were packed and at the end of the show Peter would have all the Japs hold hands and sing 'Auld Lang Sign'.

Now, we get to the real Peter Sali. They were playing at a venue just after the tragic tsunami where hundreds of thousands of people were killed or lost their homes and livelihoods and the Fukushima nuclear plant was badly damaged. At the end of that concert instead of the usual finale, Peter had everyone hold hands while he commiserated with them over the loss of their family, friends and countrymen and then played John Lennon's version of "Stand By Me".

Brother Roy said he will never ever feel an atmosphere like that again in his life. Tears flowed copiously and it was just one of those wonderful moments. Because of the response, they did this again and again at various concerts and to their shock one day when they had to go up to Tokyo where they had never played they were about to cross a major traffic crossing where when the lights turn red all vehicular traffic comes to a halt and all the pedestrians would cross whichever way they want to go at once. There is always music playing amongst the enormous electronic signs on the buildings and as the red light came on and the cars came to a halt the people started to walk out onto the intersection. The music that came on was John Lennon's "Stand By Me" and all of the people on the intersection and on the sidewalk stopped and held hands.

Peter and his brothers were astounded. The little token of commiseration started by Peter had swept the country and whenever that song comes on now in Japan people still stop and hold hands. At Peter's funeral, there were letters from the heads of the prefectures saying "We want our Peter back", and there were many letters from Japanese organisations and people who either dealt with or loved "The Kalendar Band" but especially Peter.

During the funeral, the boys had Peter singing "Stand By Me" recorded at his last Japanese concert. Peter didn't have much of a voice yet there was something about it, something that made you feel good, that made you feel you are being entertained by somebody special and you were.

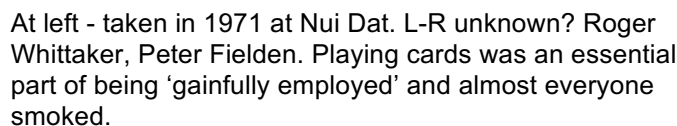
We were friends in Vietnam but I wasn't all that close to Peter until a number of years after we came home and for a short time I lived with Peter's parents when I was a little mentally lost. Peter's mother and step-father were wonderful people and Mr Sali who had several yellow cabs and cab licenses encouraged Peter and Roy to get into cab ownership themselves.

Peter had three cabs at one stage and then down to one, an old LPG burning XE Falcon which he was still driving till he could drive no more. His cab licenses must've been worth upwards of \$1 million at one time but booze, gambling and maintenance of his children who he loved and who loved him though they had their moments yet when he died he was penniless.

Peter made my life so much richer through his letters and phone calls and I am proud to have called him my friend and I miss him terribly. Knowing his story, and I don't know it all, to see him sitting on a stool at the pub drinking his stout you would never think that in another land he was a rock star. **Ron Boaler**

... here are the photos that Rieny mentions -

P/A PD
Initials and Date: SS 2/1/00



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Reunion in the Hunter Valley 20?? –
Seated - Ernie Newbold, John McFadden, Bruce Irvine, Warwick Brooker
Standing – Rieny Nieuwenhof, Grahame Dignam, Tony Sergeant.

At right: Burning unwanted papers prior to DLB being dis-established in July 1971. Gunners: standing Gary Chillingsworth, kneeling Rod Beasley, seated Jorg Kiene and unknown?



At left: Leaving the Horseshoe after our shift via Dat Do. Peter Summers, Gary Chillingsworth, Jorg Kiene.

At right: Leaving Nui Dat (5 Aug. 1971)
L-R: Gerry Pires, Jorg Kiene, unknown (cigarette in hand), Rod Beasley. Those in polies were leaving, those in greens had a few 'wakies' to go. Capt. Tim Evans was on this flight home.



We would love to know who the unknown gunner is, he features in two photos?



Mail Out

I started this in September, 2017 and have decided to continue running down the alphabet of names and sending some emails to blokes in general to say g'day and just to generally keep in touch. A lot of the blokes I've never met, so it's just to keep some connection alive. Plus, it's good to keep in touch, even sporadically, it may help to avoid any unpleasant unforeseen surprises.

Mail In - Here are the responses...

. **Ken Woodbine** – “Enjoy the trip to India.

Several people I know have been there – you either love it, and return regularly, or hate it and would never go back again. Ken W”

. **Vic Rae** – “G'day Paul. Sounds like a good time in a country with a climate that I don't envy. Good to hear your motoring on and enjoying life.

Your latest edition of *Eyes & Ears* aroused some memories of the late sixties when I had marched into 130 Gun Loc Bty at Padstow. Your mention of the Sound Ranging Troop in SVN recalled the return of our Sound Ranging No 5 equipment and after a long wait the release of 1942 war stock American Sound Ranging equipment to the battery. I'll have a scout around some other ancients and see what their memories are of the Exercise at Tianjara when we were joined by C Troop 131 Div Loc Bty CP section. I will let you know what can be recalled. Enjoy, Vic Rae - Editor Gunfire”

. **Gary Navas** – “Hi Paul. I didn't respond to an earlier email from you because I just thought you had sent it to the wrong person, (as I am not even sure we have ever met but probably have at some stage and I have forgotten). I Can't find the email but have an idea that it said you now live in Canada or am I getting confused with someone else (again).

Anyway, there's not much to say about myself but I'll try. Boxing Day is when my family get together for an easy cold lunch and it is nice to have everyone get together. 3rd Jan was my 70th birthday but it was just another quiet day. Margaret had been sick for a few days. I had a port and some cheese and biscuits to celebrate the milestone. We recently had our bike (Kawasaki VN1600) converted to a trike and have finally sorted out a couple of small issues. We ride most weekends with Ulysses and I ride with the guys sometimes through the week.

Hope you enjoy your trip to India and stay safe and well. That's it for me, not a lot else happens for us.

Regards, Gary”

. **Rob Retrot** - Hi Paul,

Great to hear from you and we hope you are enjoying your holiday in India. Come to think of it, there appears to be more and more people we know going there for holidays. We have been much too busy to go anywhere lately but all the work has finally paid off and we are living in our new house. The whole project took four years and we moved in on 5 March. There is still a lot of work - things to be carried over and then the cleaning and making ready for sale of our "old" house. But it is fabulous being in our new, specially designed for us, house. We got connected to the NBN today and were able to let go of our temporary wi-fi hotspot something or other on our phones which has proved to be somewhat unreliable. I now have ton of emails to work through. Anyway - all good. We are both well, albeit slightly worn out from the many trips between the two houses carrying stuff.

Let us know if you are ever in Brisbane - we have room if you need it and would love to catch up.

best wishes

Rob and Judith

. **John Stanford** – ‘Paul. Thanks for staying in touch. I'm still entrenched here in the Gold Coast with the odd foray on holidays and to catch up with the grand kids, as appears the case with most of us these days.

In recent times, I have caught up with Ian Brignell and Col West who are 'travelling well'.

On a recent visit to Melbourne I took the opportunity and visited the National Vietnam Museum on Phillip Island for the first time - an interesting day out. I was under the impression that the radar was one of the exhibits there but unfortunately all I saw was the "stack" and the boxes that were used in the command post.

On another day out I visited North Head and then on to North Fort where there is now a great cafe with a magnificent outlook. Not much up there now as everything has moved to the new School of Artillery at Puckapunyal (somebody has got it in for the Gunners). An interesting note is that the old Commandant's married quarter just outside the school is now being rented for in excess of \$1700 a week.

Keep up the good work of keeping us in touch.

Regards, John S”

Ed – refer John's comments re: his visit to NVM at Phillip Island to **Grahame Dignam's** communications article with Phil Dressing earlier on.

. **Graham Williams** - “Hi Paul. Yep, you are right...always good to get rid of the tourists after Xmas.

Unfortunately, in our little backwater the sea changers are flooding in to replace them. Things have been relatively quiet here. Had another trip back to Vietnam in December. Went over crook but came back a lot worse. Multiple problems but all resolved by early February so cannot complain.

Made a command decision the other day to March in Sydney this year for Anzac Day. The old kill 5 birds with one stone trick. A biannual reunion with my brother and cousins. Catching up with 2 aunts I have not seen since returning from Vietnam aged 97 and 95 respectively with both still living in their own homes and last but not least to have a look at the home I grew up in in Haberfield. Was told a lot of money had been poured into renovations there and the place looked fabulous. As Haberfield is a heritage listed suburb there is not much one is allowed to do by way of outside renovation or changing the front of the home so just wanted a look and thoughts of good neighbours, friends etc with memories.

When I came good in Feb was climbing up walls to get out and about but Jenni came up with a plan to thwart that. Was involved in a nasty car accident and is one very lucky woman. She is fine, just very shaken at the time but did her level best to kill "Harry the Holden." Harry of course is my car...she only has accidents in that and not her own vehicle. Do you think it could be a plot against me?

Only one adventure planned for this year so far. Will be off to Europe in May spending a few days in different cities before embarking on a river cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam. While it is not that far away I am surprised I am not a little excited in any way. Ha, ha, maybe that is a cost factor mate. You know...One trip to Europe = five trips to Asia. Anyway, after that, once the financial statements are checked will consider the next trip which will definitely be Asia (somewhere?????) and hopefully before the end of the year.

It had been my intention this year to introduce myself to Bert Blink when he came up for our annual festival (once called Wintersun and now known as Cooly Rocks On) with his Goggomobils. Unfortunately, I will be away so next year maybe. Funny thing that. I have often photographed and looked over his cars in the past but was unaware he served with the Detachment.

Jenni is presently away on the dog show patrol and I have little else to report. On that note, it's goodbye from me for now. May all your Bollywood dreams come true...time now for me to earn the weekly wage on the punt.

Cheers, Graham Williams."

. Michael Quinlan – "Hi Paul. Sorry for the tardy reply. Over the past 12 months I have had my prostate removed (prostate cancer), then I was diagnosed with bone on bone in both hips and am now recovering from the second total hip replacement, just out of hospital. In between times we went to Japan for the cherry blossom festival for two weeks then a 7-week tour of Africa, Egypt and Jordan all on two very sore hips. All is well now and well on the road to total recovery (thanks to DVA and the gold card). We plan a 3-month trip in our new caravan commencing 17 May. How are things with you? I believe you should be knighted for all the hard work on "*Eyes and Ears*". We have the annual 131 reunion this year in Sydney, should be a great affair as usual. Regards, Michael"

. Iain Kennedy – 'Paul.

Finally, I can report the rebuild has started after an interminable delay. have attached photos.



Apart from that still doing three days a week with Printing industry and part time with the online business. I am finally back riding the bike on a regular basis, though I have to do an Oxygen recovery test before I can go back racing. But that will be a while off as need to get a level of fitness first.

As you probably know, we have had a good long summer and it is still continuing late into March. Normally we would have visited Malaysia and Thailand to see family, but because of the house construction, we cannot go away until the walls are up.

Marty Rhone just released a new single: "We had a good thing Goin'" and in the video my Line dance members are in there, including "ME" another 30 seconds of fame. Ha, Ha!

Just finished a round of birthday dinners and now need a diet to get back to my natural svelte physic.

Yesterday spent all afternoon as the only man with 30 women while they attended make up workshop. Photos attached.



Still waiting for DVA to respond to my application for upgrade of my disability status. But we cannot rush these things, Iain."

. Terry Bruce – "Paul. In responding to your e-mail of 19/02, I realised that I hadn't replied to your earlier e-mail regarding the Christmas break.

We spent a quieter than normal Christmas day last with only about twenty people here for lunch and a similar number for dinner. We've had a higher number attend in past years but the family dynamic changes over time (nieces and nephews marrying and thus having other priorities, for example).

Nevertheless, we had a very quiet and enjoyable time under the circumstances (no bushfires in the area, as has happened occasionally in previous years, to disrupt our relaxation).

That's about all the information I have for the moment – we're still living 'the good life' at Orangeville, enjoying our grandkids and working on the property as required. We've just built a 'Jeep Shed' in which to house all three Jeeps in their own area along with our stock of parts. Previously the Jeeps and parts were housed in various sheds and carports around the property.

Regards, Terry"

Ed – I extracted Terry's ANZAC Day planned activities and placed them in the "Notice Board" below.

I also sent Terry a photo of a Jeep (one of his "Passions") taken in Jaipur, India – looked half reasonable for a working horse of its age.



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

There's plenty of room for notices – has anyone got or getting any events planned?
Just send an email and I'll post it. Ed

April - ANZAC DAY – it's on a Thursday this year. Got any plans? Where do you think you'll be? How about letting us know what you're getting up to – what's being planned?

. Sydney – **Peter Creedon** – "Hi Paul. Every year a group of us meet on Anzac Day, **Peter Larkin, Graeme Owen, Russell Jackson, Brett Rainsford, Brian Smyth, Jeff Schafer, Michael Quinlan, Kevin Browning, Terry Erbs, John Henshaw, Wes Hindmarsh, Randall Jones and Jim Merchant.**

Seeing that the unit was made up of people from around the country we rotate out meetings between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

This year we meet in Sydney. Regards Peter"

. **Sydney – Allen Morley** – “The Anzac Day March in Sydney will form up, probably in Bent Street (to be confirmed closer to the day) at 10am on April 25th. The 131 Banner will be the rallying point. The March will proceed via Elizabeth St to Hyde Park.

Lunch has been organised for the Zest Restaurant, City Tattersalls Club, entrance in Pitt St. All locators are invited to join our group.

Please advise Allen Morley, awmorley@optusnet.com.au or Mob 0411 962 510 if you will be attending.

Cheers, Allen.”

. Anzac Day lunch has been organised for Zest restaurant at the Tatts club and if you are in Sydney CBD –contact Allen Morley to arrange a seat at the table. Form up for the March will be in Bent Street at around 10.00AM under the banner.

. **Camden – Terry Bruce** - In regard to the upcoming ANZAC day activities, I plan to attend the Dawn service in Camden, as usual, accompanied by my sons and possibly a couple of grandchildren, after which we go across the road to the Camden RSL for breakfast and in the process, catch up with a few more people, some being my neighbours and often people I know from the RFS, either members of my brigade or adjoining brigades.

After returning home from the RSL and a bit later in the morning we usually start the Jeep if we can (it's a 1944 model and a bit cantankerous) and one of my sons will drive it/me back to Camden where we'll take part in the march (I used to march but since I've had the knee issue I find it more convenient to be driven in the Jeep). The family usually comes to watch the march and catches up with us at the conclusion for the mid-morning service. At the conclusion of the service we then all come home for lunch. It is interesting to note that the number of people attending both the dawn service and the mid-morning service at Camden has grown year by year in the time that I've been attending (some time now) and it's great to see that.

– **Grahame Dignam** – “Dicko not a big do. Just me marching in **Camden** with, I hope, Daughter and family of 4 and Sons' family of 4 to wave as I go past. Dig”

Geelong – Rieny Nieuwenhof – “ANZAC Day here in Geelong will be very busy for our Association with at least 12 Services across our region. We make an effort to have a representative at each ceremony and lay a wreath. The day begins with a pre-dawn service at the Geelong Peace Memorial, then a dawn service at Eastern Beach overlooking the water. There is a march through the streets of Geelong ending with a service at the main Park. Other Memorial services are held in Ocean Grove, Torquay, Leopold, Drysdale, Portarlington, Inverleigh, Colac etc. We usually end up at the Geelong RSL for some liquid refreshments after such a strenuous day. Rieny Nieuwenhof”

. **Brisbane – Terry Erbs** – “All Locators, families and friends are invited to 20th STA Regiment's traditional Dawn Service to be held at the Regiment's memorial wall in front of HQ building, Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera. If the base security status remains unchanged, entry will be via the main gate from 3.30am

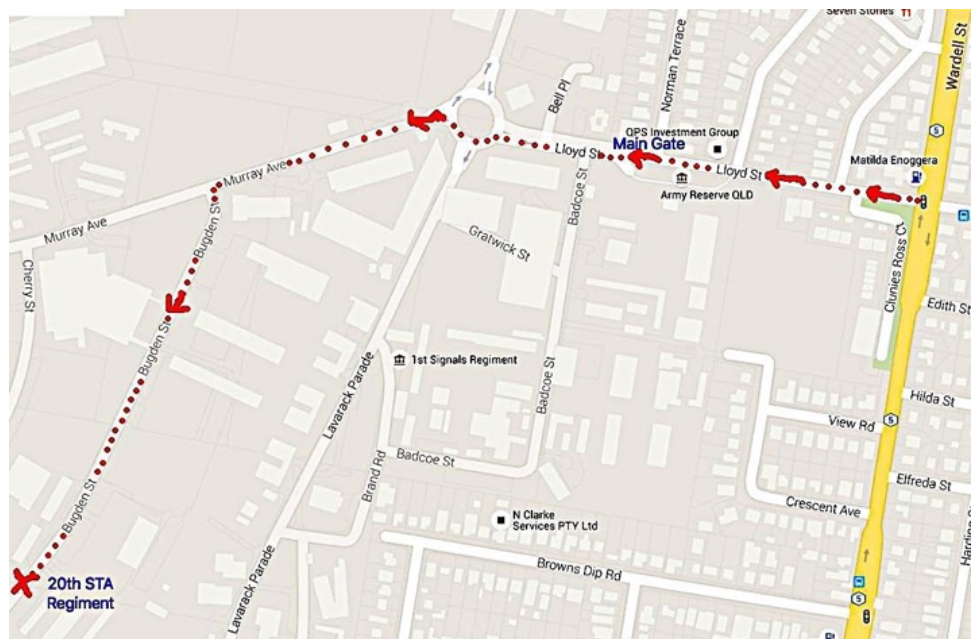
[see map].

The traditional Gunfire breakfast [biscuits, coffee & rum] commences at 4.30am in front of HQ building, followed by the Dawn Service at 5am in front the Regiment's memorial wall. After the service, breakfast will be served beside the Menz Club, in the Checkley Annex, from about 5.30am, for the cost of a gold coin per person.

Free travel on the day is available for veterans using public transport, either via Gaythorne railway station or BCC council buses into the CBD. The LSTAA banner will be located on the corner of George & Mary St from about 9.00am and this will be our rallying point. [note - this year Mary St will be closed due to police requirements].

The Brisbane march commences at 10am, our group [5] are required to form up at 10.20am in George St, at position 41, behind 108 Field Bty. Assoc. and ahead of Royal Australian Artillery Association.

Note – Brisbane's 2019 ANZAC Day march map has yet to be published but will provide when available.



Afterwards, it's an easy short walk to the Stock Exchange Hotel, at the corner of Edward & Charlotte St, with early entry to Locator's & family using tickets issued by RSM Kym Fox or RP Sergeant - I'll have few spare tickets too! So hope to see you all at the Stock Exchange Hotel, to catch-up with mates, family and friends, have a few convivial drinks and maybe a meal.

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: I have read a book loaned to me by Warwick Hamilton, the Det's OC 1967-68 called "The Nashos' Vietnam War" by Mark Dapin it is interesting reading. Plenty about Conshies and Call-up Dodgers, but also some of the action reporting too. The quotes from newspapers show how the government managed to hide the truth on many aspects, including the quality of the food we ate, treatment by "courteous" RDIs, "choice" of corps (I didn't get either my first or second choice) and "volunteering" for that Asian holiday (I don't recall volunteering to go). A couple of quotes to finish off this note: "There was little public understanding that the (NS) scheme was searching for the fittest and brightest ..." and "But the scheme was never going pull men from the bottom of the heap". Cheers for now, Allen

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 9th April, 2019 at 1100hrs

Venue: Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, 26 Humphries Rd., Wakeley 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, 12th March, 2019 at 1105hrs...

Attendees were: Bert Blink, Grahame Dignam, Ernest Newbold, Ian Amos, Nick Proskurin, Merv Nairn, Ged Carroll and George Lane,

Financial Membership as at 1 February 2019 is currently 117, plus Associates 2, plus Affiliates 9 = Total 128
Plus Lapsed 38 members, Deceased 7 Members

Presidents report.

1. My apologies for my non-attendance. I have an appointment at Granville re my ongoing battle with DVA. Bob B, from being rejected for not working, I find that because I have worked at State and Federal elections – 1 day very couple of years it worked out, I am regarded as employed! 2. Thanks Bert for chairing the meeting 3. Anzac Day lunch at Zest is confirmed for 12 noon. Thanks George for confirming your group 4. LSTAA meeting next Sunday – 17th March (St Patrick's Day) at Paddington RSL 5. How are we doing on pics for the album? 6. I had a letter from Phil McLachlan, ex-131 and living on the Gold Coast. He was with 131 at School of Arty 63-64 as a Gunner, then 71-74 as a Staff Sgt. He ended up as a Capt 1983. He wanted to know why he is not listed on our website. I have spoken to him to explain why a lot of 131ers who did not travel to SVN are not on our list, mainly because we have no record of them. GD his address is 7 David Court, Miami QLD 4220, Ph 07 5576 1074, Mob 0427 836 783 7. Warwick Hamilton is due home from hospital either today or yesterday. He has had a rough trot with his leukaemia and golden staph infection at injection sites etc 8. I will see lots of Gooks in China but no trusty SLR in case of problems
Regards, Allen

Health issues. Grahame advised that following a visit to his GP this morning he was advised that the DVA subsidised FLU shot would not be available until April. The version available now via the chemist is a private issue and will I incur a personal own cost.

General Business.

Discussions ensued on the following:

- . Reminder by George that may 4/5 in Coffs Harbour has gathered a good following. It is a non-official reunion but a great place to gather and enjoy the climate before it's destroyed and remember the good time when all we had was weather!
- . NVV Museum display - see correspondence sent with the Agenda for this meeting.
- . Anzac Day lunch has been organised for Zest restaurant at the Tatts club and if you are in Sydney CBD –contact Allen Morley to arrange a seat at the table. Form up for the March will be in Bent Street at around 10.00AM under the banner.
- . A reminder advert for the Association merchandise appeared in the last Eyes & Ears as a means of promoting sales.

If you've got more photos that you want added, just send them to: - Paul Dickson – web Photos
131eyesandears@gmail.com– BUT DON'T FORGET TO ADD TITLES/NAMES ETC.



. Birthdays in the Battery...April –

Date	Name	Regt No	YOB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	DES SPENCER	3787905	1945	03 01 1967	13 12 1967	
1	IAN MORRIS Capt.	243062	1941	10 03 1970	09 07 1970	RAEME
	" "			09 07 1970	11 03 1971	106 Fd Wkshp
2	HILTON HOLLOWAY	1736606	1949	16 12 1970	03 05 1971	131
	" "			03 05 1971	26 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
4	KEVIN MAKER	2251507	1949	26 08 1969	13 08 1970	
4	WILLIAM LAUGHLIN	2788465	1945	13 01 1969	27 08 1969	
7	JOHN McFADDEN	2783243	1945	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	
7	DAVID MARTIN	2781662	1945	22 04 1966	29 04 1967	
8	RICHARD BRISTOW	1733143	1945	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	
8	LEON DJATSCHENKO	312532	1949	26 08 1969	13 08 1970	
9	TERRENCE MYERS	217798	1950	08 05 1969	30 04 1970	
11	MICHAEL McDONNELL	2781377	1945	04 05 1966	11 04 1967	
11	TERRENCE FOX	1200934	1949	08 07 1968	02 07 1969	
12	KEVIN BEVANS	3798316	1949	10 02 1971	07 06 1971	131
	" "			07 06 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
15	RIENY NIEUWENHOF	3798241	1947	10 02 1971	05 08 1971	
19	RON ROYAL WO2	23552	1929	02 03 1967	20 02 1968	† 01.05.02
19	PETER CLARKE	3792212	1947	11 11 1968	27 08 1969	
19	BARRY DYSON	3795956	1947	03 06 1970	04 03 1971	
20	ANTHONY TURNER	1202849	1946	27 01 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "			01 07 1971	15 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
21	JEFFREY BASSFORD	2792419	1949	29 04 1970	14 04 1971	
21	NEVILLE DAVIS	5716997	1949	11 02 1971	12 08 1971	
22	BARRY CAMPTON Capt.	61270	1937	{14 07 1963	22 07 1963	
	" "			{13 08 1966	28 04 1967	
22	MARK SZYPULSKI	313270	1951	19 08 1970	17 03 1971	4 & 12 Fd Regt.
	" "			18 03 1971	29 07 1971	131
23	MURRAY SMALE	5411587	1948	27 11 1967	20 08 1968	
24	JOHANNES LAS	3792338	1947	23 09 1968	18 06 1969	
25	KEVIN BANKS	3794366	1948	27 11 1969	04 06 1970	
25	QUENTIN KNIGHT	2412578	1949	09 12 1968	24 09 1969	
26	GRAHAME DIGNAM	2784745	1946	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
26	WILLIAM CROWTHER	215416	1946	22 04 1966	02 11 1966	
27	GERALD YOUNG Maj.	311460	1926	{06 03 1967	04 04 1967	RAEME
	" "			{25 05 1967	22 06 1967	RAEME
28	GARY LOVELL	218160	1950	08 05 1969	30 04 1970	
29	RON MASON	3787154	1945	04 05 1966	03 03 1967	
29	KEVIN THORNTON	2781420	1945	04 05 1966	02 02 1967	
29	BERNARD ERICA	3787334	1945	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	† 23.11.16
29	PETER FUHRMANN	3789807	1946	21 06 1967	02 04 1968	
30	IAN McMILLAN	215117	1945	15 07 1970	09 09 1970	

*Above colour background coding explanation – Red – financial Locator, Yellow – located Locator, Black – passed Locator, Blue – honorary Member, White – NOT Located Locator.

Ed – 9 blokes not highlighted is not looking all that promising. So as usual, all I can do is see if I can stimulate some investigative work and see who we can discover.

. Locator Profiles – we've received **157** and we've sent out **157**. Ed – how long is it going to take to get to, now lets get conservative and say **160?**

. 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 Graeme 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.)

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

www.artilleryhistory.org



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

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.rnzaa.org.nz/>

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

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