

THE EYES and EARS

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

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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

2020 – 54 Years and the Detachment 131 Spirit Lives On: 1966 – 1971



wishing all of our readers
and their families a
very happy Christmas



Hope you ALL have an
enjoyable and safe
festive season...



**Remembrance Day – Sydney – alongside the Opera House –
A familiar place but a different time...
And in the morning, We will remember them.**

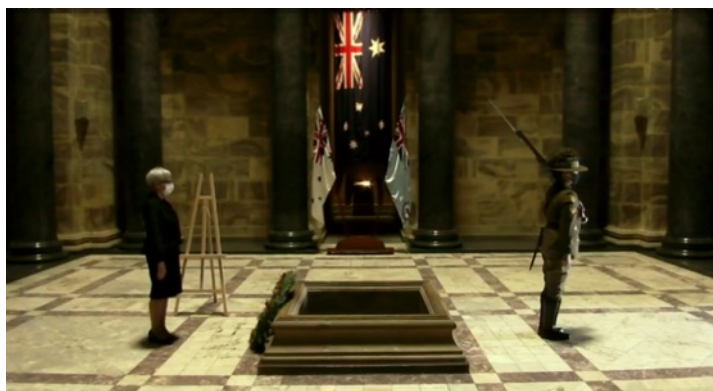
Remembrance Day – Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance – Ian Campbell

Due to continuing lockdown restrictions in Victoria that restricted the attendance by the public at the Shrine, the ceremony was presented using the Shrine's Facebook live stream and was a moving memorial honouring the Service and Sacrifice of those passed.

Hosted by Peter Meehan, (what a great voice!!) the ceremony featured Victorian Governor Hon. Linda Dessau AC, the Royal Australian Navy Brass Quintet, the 2nd/10th Light Artillery Battery, the Exaudi Youth Choir and several others.

An interesting fact about the service is that when daylight savings was introduced into Victoria prior to the 1975 Remembrance Day ceremony the beam of sunlight of that was designed to shine on the Stone of Remembrance at 11:00am no longer does so. RMIT surveying lecturer Frank Johnston and some colleagues were tasked with restoring the beam using a two-mirror system and mathematical calculations to determine their angles.





The service is still available to view at <https://www.facebook.com/190880997622334/videos/353782555719486>
A few pictures captured from the stream are included. **Ian Campbell.**

Remembrance Day – Paul Dickson at St Pauls Church in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico (where I live).

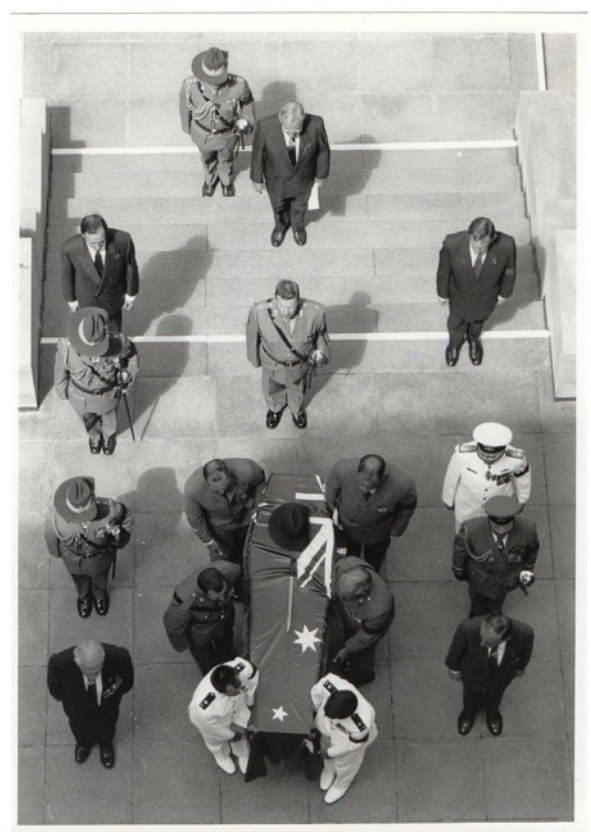
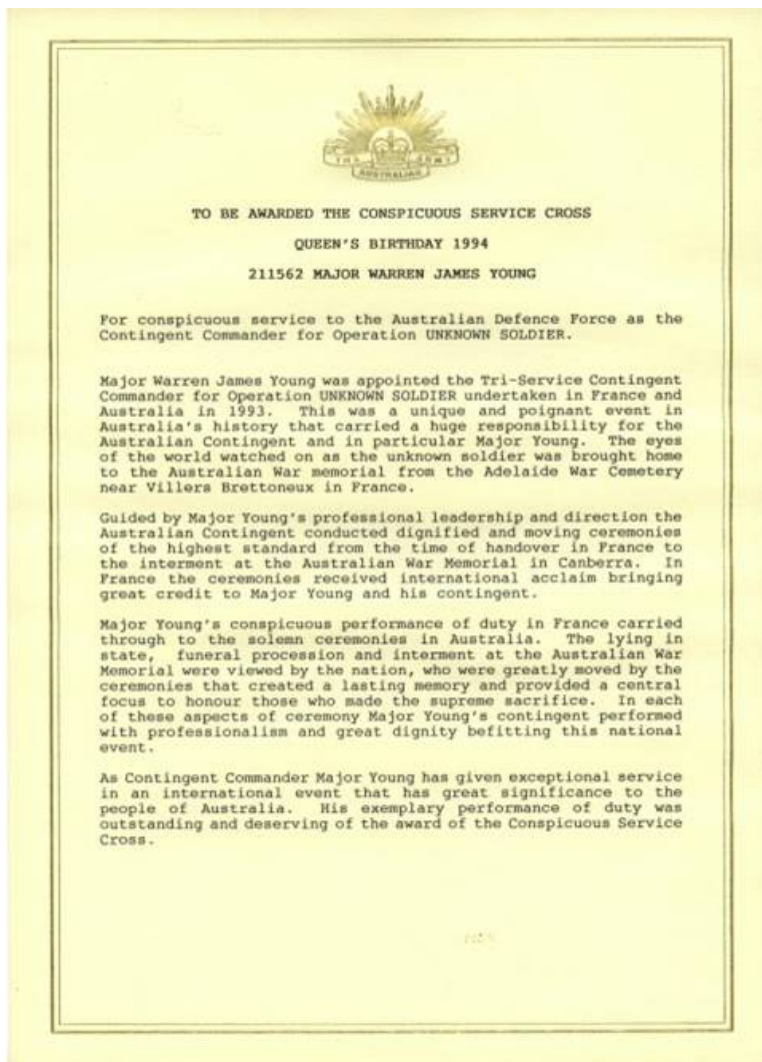
As the service was held outside social distancing was easy, the public was very restricted, but I managed to get 9 flag bearers (including Helen, my wife, who carried the flag of the Netherlands in memory of her father) and the blokes doubled up to do readings. The weather was also very easy on us. Warren Young, another Aussie, did the honours in carrying the Australian flag.



One of the flagbearers / readers was **Warren Young** (standing next to me in the main photo above), an Australian, who lives in SMdA, has a very interesting background and more particularly is the honour he had in 1993 – read on to find out...

I am a veteran of 22 years' service in the Australian regular army. I served in both conventional forces (Royal Australian Engineers) and Special Forces (1 Commando Regiment) during that time. Throughout my career, I was honoured to represent my country in many overseas locations, including 2 years with the US Army's 25th Infantry Division (based out of Hawaii) and also operational service in Afghanistan. But, the 11th day of November holds a very special place in my heart, because on that very day back in 1993 I was honoured to be the military contingent commander (rank of Major) responsible for executing the Australian Government's plan to bring an **Australian Unknown Soldier** home from the WWI battlefields of France - to be interred at the AWM in our Capital City Canberra. I've attached a copy of my citation in the Queens Birthday Honours List of 1994 – because it tells the story a little better than I can (see below). The second photo (below) is taken just as we were moving into the War Memorial's Hall of Remembrance. I am directly behind the Unknown Soldier and I am flanked by the then Prime Minister Paul Keating, the Governor General Bill Hayden, and the Chief of the Defence Force, as well as the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force.





Remembrance Day in Dookie with Ron Mason - I had a follow up response and here's what Ron had to say -

"Paul, no photos of our little (Remembrance Day) service that I know of. The Dookie RSL has 12 members & no building to look after, we mainly get together to organize Anzac & Remembrance Days plus an AGM & most importantly a Xmas breakup at the local pub. The pub breakup includes the Ladies Auxiliary so it all works pretty well. On Anzac Day under normal circumstances everyone & half the town all move down to the Memorial Hall after the service for a soup & sandwich lunch - the Ladies Aux do the organizing & the bulk of the work, help sometimes comes from the local Lions & other people in the community. Service personnel often manage to find a corner with a few cans to help the day along. San Miguel de Allende - will chase that up on Google maps.

Stay safe, Ron"

Some facts re: Dookie

. Ron is the Secretary of Dookie RSL

. Dookie is a town in the Goulburn Valley region of Victoria, Australia. It is situated in a valley between Mount Major and Mount Saddleback. Dookie is a farming community. At the 2016 census, Dookie had a population of 328.

Elevation: 189 m / **Location:** 220 km (137 mi) N of Melbourne; 29 km (18 mi) E of Shepparton; 42 km (26 mi) W of Benalla.

Now you know where it is, drop in and catch up with Ron!

Bill Taggart – ex- 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery

11.11.20 –

To all my friends in the 1/83rd

Veterans Day in the US is November 11. Australian Veterans commemorate Remembrance Day on November 11. (Remembrance Day is dedicated to Australians who died as a result of war.

Australia and New Zealand also share a day of remembrance on Anzac Day, April 25.

While this a shared occasion for us all, we all reflect on what this day means to each of us personally, it is a day of solemn reminders that are unique to each individual.

Sadly, each year there a fewer of us to commemorate this special day. As I have told you before, I will not say Happy Veterans Day, that sentiment does not seem to be the correct one that we should wish each other. Rather I want to tell all

of you how grateful I am for your friendship over these past years. Some of you are new friends, some are very long-time friends but we all share a bond that is ours alone.

I am very thankful that I am able to sit here and write this today. Besides Veterans Day it is also my Birthday and I have so many reasons to be grateful to God for the many gifts he has given me. So many, my wife, kids, grandkids and other family, friends, my brothers in the 1/83rd and living in this wonderful country of ours.

We are all keenly aware of the divisions in our country today. Despite that, there is still no other country that is greater. My wish for all of us is that, no matter how you feel about the political situation in our country, we all strive to move forward and try to be better and more considerate of others. If we all could learn to disagree without being disagreeable, it would do wonders to help us all heal.

We are all today, a bit older, hopefully a lot wiser and we should all realize how blessed and fortunate we are and have been. We should all be proud of what we all did and that we are still here to be thankful for our good fortune. It is with great respect that I can call you all my friends and to have had the great privilege of having served our great country along with all of you.

Finally, let us say a prayer for our brothers and all from the 1/83rd family who are no longer with us. We miss them all and they will forever be part of the brotherhood of the 1/83rd.

Bill

LEST WE FORGET.

...then on 14.11.20 Bill sent this -

Today is the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Vietnam Memorial Wall...

https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/vietnam-veterans-memorial-dedicated?cmpid=email-hist-tdih-2020-1113-11132020&om_rid=34e89d57fa6bdba0ddac82855136be0e7732017f6e5c6e182b046458adb3f631

LEST WE FORGET

Bill

An Anniversary Milestone –

On 24th November 1954, 131 Divisional Locating Battery came into being.
It morphed from 31 Locating Battery and was located at Pymble in the northern suburbs of Sydney.

Happy 66th birthday 131 Div Loc Bty!

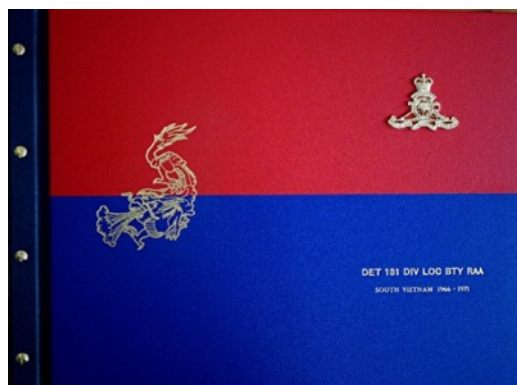
. The “Lost Locator Project”



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.



. Insights and Recollections...

This topic/s have raised so much interest – we're still in the middle of some really great discoveries with some remarkable memories being brought back to life.

The series will continue on the receipt of more Insights and Recollections, so if you would care to contribute, please send your Insights and Recollections –

Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

A Continuation of a story commenced last August...

“The Saga of the Hat.”

by Grahame Dignam

This is great story surrounding an unbelievable discovery in a far-off land with an even more amazing outcome -

It was a dark and stormy night....

On the 15/5/1948 Mrs Connell gave birth to a son **Leslie Philip Connell**, who years later was to serve in South Vietnam with Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA.

We think: While mingling with some Artillery troops from a USA Battery he swapped his Aussie slouch hat for some very significant thing which is still unknown to the writer.

Fast forward 51 years, now 2020, and the Sec/Treas of 131 Locators Assn Inc. – aka Grahame Dignam - received the following email:

This begins “The Saga of the Hat” ...

Nicholas Montgomery – Fri 21 Aug,

Dear 131 Locators' representative;

My name is Nicholas Montgomery and I am writing this email from Missouri, USA. I am reaching out to you in the hope that you can help me find the family of a soldier in your regiment.

A few days ago, I purchased a military slouch hat from an antique store and found the name Les Connell on the inside along with his serial number. With the help of a re-enactment group on Facebook, I found his service record. I contacted the DVA to help me find him, but I learned that he passed away and didn't have any family listed.

I was lead to the Australian War Memorial for a donation but I'd rather his family have it than for it to sit in a box in the archives. I was told to look up artillery regiments to see if they could help me, and I found your group on the internet and well, here I am.

I'm not sure if the name Leslie Phillip Connell is known by any of your members but I'd like to return his hat. I honestly hope that you can help me do the right thing?

I have his record enclosed in this email for verification.

https://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/veteran?id=1242524&c=VIETNAM&fbclid=IwAR08kL1rq0ZA99MhexX75y-tqH_PJjNYhsjcReghRehTTqrtlYHkae631p4

Sincerely; Nicholas Montgomery

Grahame Dignam's response Fri, 21 Aug

Hello Nicholas,

Thanks for being in touch.

It is quite a story and one that we will test ourselves on.

We are in contact with fellow vets who served with Les Connell and will try to establish if there are any family contacts still around. We publish a monthly Newsletter and the item will be included to generate a response. Also, we will send a few direct emails which will hopefully turn up something.

Sit tight and we will let you know how we got on. Grahame Dignam

Nicholas responded

Roger that friend, I'll be on standby. If I don't respond quickly, it's just the time zone difference.

The next step was finding his mates so emails were dispatched by Grahame:

Chris Chapple responds Mon 31 Aug

Hi Grahame, I knew Les very well along with **Richard Chaplin**, **Dave Reilly** and **Dave Negus**. We were sort of a group. When I learned of Les' passing I did a Google search and found his undertaker who put me in touch with Les' partner, a male person.

I ended up contacting him by phone and we had a good chat. I recall he was very sad to lose Les and very much welcomed my call.

I have not had further contact and will need to look for some notes I took at the time to get the thread back, not too hopeful though.

Will see what I can do, my reading of the tea leaves is that the partner would treasure having the hat. Chris Chapple

Grahame Mon 31 Aug responds

Chris, thanks for your reply - it may turn out well for someone and a treasured memory enhanced.
I won't jump the gun just yet as I will wait till you can confirm real contact details. No sense in getting one's hope up for nought.
Please let me know how you get on?
Regards, Grahame Dignam

Then this arrived...

Richard Chaplin Fri 4 Sep

Hi Grahame,
I served with Les Connell in 131 Div Loc Battery both at Holsworthy and Vietnam, and got in contact with his sister Lynne Watson following Les' passing in 2011.
As you will see from Lynne's email below she would love to receive her brother's slouch hat.
It was very good of Nicholas Montgomery to do all the research he undertook, and to kindly offer to reunite the slouch with Les's family. An amazing story.
If you could connect Lyne with Nicholas that would be terrific.
Kind regards, Richard Chaplin

Begin forwarded messages:

From: Lynne Watson
Subject: Re: Les (Phil) Connell's slouch hat
Date: 3 September 2020
To: Richard Chaplin
Dear Richard

Nice to hear from you and hoping all is well? Wondering how Les' slouch hat would be found in the USA?? I remember seeing a slouch hat in his home many years ago but never asked any questions about it. It would be great to have it returned as I would pass it on to my son who is serving in the Army. I have passed on Les' and my late dad's war medals to him. Any help would be very much appreciated. You can pass on my details to Grahame and we will see what happens from there.

Regards, Lynne Watson

From: Richard Chaplin
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2020
To: Lynne Watson
Subject: Les (Phil) Connell's slouch hat

Hi Lynne,
It's been a long time since we connected but I thought you would like to know that your brother's army slouch hat has recently turned up in Missouri USA - see pages 11-12 of attached 131 Div Loc Bty newsletter. The person who bought it (Nicholas Montgomery) would like to return to its rightful owner, and I thought of you.
It may be more efficient if you contact Grahame Dignam direct at sectreas131locators@gmail.com who will then be able to put you in contact with Nicholas Montgomery....
Pretty amazing journey after 50 years!
Let me know if you need my help.
I hope this finds you well.
Kind regards, Richard Chaplin

So, the wheels continue to turn...

Grahame Dignam Sep 15

Hello Richard, Lynne and Chris.
On Tuesday last week as usual, the 131 Locators had a ZOOM meeting due to the Corona Virus restriction on meetings. I had the pleasure of informing all those members at that meeting of the developments regarding the messages I received first from Chris, then from Richard and the topper from Lynne Watson, the sister of Les Connell.
Now that we have made contact and Lynne has agreed to take custody of the slouch hat, we will put people in contact to start the process. The meeting has agreed to cover reasonable costs for the repatriation of the hat to Lynne. And the association will ensure Nicholas is not out of pocket for his act of kindness.
To this end Lynne, would you mind if I make contact with Nicholas and perform an introduction for you formally via email addresses (we are very old school) and make the offer to cover the postage costs from the USA to your preferred address. I would then leave the finer details to you to complete with Nicholas and we would recompense him for his costs. We will advise you all of future developments and the outcome.
Regards to all,
Grahame Dignam, Secretary / Treasurer, 131 Locators Assn Inc ABN 92 663 816 973

Chris Chapple 16 Sep

Thanks, so much Grahame. Chris

Lynne Watson 16 Sep

Hello to all,

Your help is very much appreciated. I am more than happy for you to get in contact with Nicholas, and act on my behalf and discuss postage and costs associated etc. When all is organised, you're more than welcome to pass on my email address and I can discuss with him the address in which to post to.

Kind regards, Lynne Watson

And then...

Grahame 20 Sep

Hello Nicholas, and Lynne.

I apologise for our tardiness but a good result is worth waiting for. We put our scouts to work and they have come up trumps!

Nicholas, I would like to formally introduce you to Lynne Watson, sister of Leslie P Connell, who will gladly accept your offer of returning Les' slouch hat. I have added Lynne into the email so you can chat.

Nicholas, the 131 Locators Association would not like you to be out of pocket due to your good nature and generous offer to return the hat so we would like to cover the costs you might incur in arranging it's return. We would arrange a bank to bank transfer in your favour once you provide your details and the required amount.

We would like to thank you for your curiosity, and your efforts to find the family of the owner.

Kind regards

Grahame Dignam, Secretary / Treasurer, 131 Locators Assn Inc

And the final act...

Nicholas Montgomery Sun 20 Sep

Thank you grandly my friend. I have had a lot of people supporting this quest through American Vietnam war groups. There is no need to worry about money; consider it as a random act of kindness.

My grandfather served in Vietnam as well, US 1st Marine Division, so I know how important family history can be.

Grahame Sun 20 Sep

You are most kind Nicholas. We thank you again,

Travel well...

Regards

Grahame Dignam, Secretary / Treasurer, 131 Locators Assn Inc

"Hat of Vietnam War Australian veteran found in Warrensburg"

By Sara Lawson

sara.lawson@dsjnow.com

Sep 23, 2020

A hat belonging to Australian veteran Leslie Phillip Connell and found in Warrensburg sits on the desk of University of Central Missouri graduate student Nicholas Montgomery. Montgomery plans to return the hat to Connell's family.



WARRENSBURG (Missouri, USA) — Across time and across the world, a military slouch hat found in Warrensburg belonging to an Australian veteran is making its way home.

Nicholas Montgomery, a graduate student majoring in history at the University of Central Missouri, was browsing the selection at Those Were the Days in downtown Warrensburg when he found a hat for sale.

"I'm a bit of a collector, I suppose, of interesting hats," Montgomery said. "I'm not really from around here ... when I heard there was a three-storey thrift store, I was just dying to go."

Montgomery found the hat in part of a display in the store and recognized it as being from the Australian military. After purchasing the hat for \$US45, Montgomery found the name and serial number of Leslie Phillip Connell of the Australian army.

Montgomery said this is the first time he has found an article of clothing with the full serial number and a still-legible name.

Montgomery asked around a Vietnam War re-enactment group he participated in and it was suggested he contact the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The DVA assisted in finding Connell's service record. It was discovered that Connell served in the Vietnam War between 1969 and 1970 with the 131st Locating Battery of the Australian Military.

Montgomery said he wanted to return the hat to Connell but found out that Connell died in 2011.

After contacting the DVA, Montgomery contacted the 131 Locators Association, looking into finding individuals Connell served with as well as his family.

Connell's sister, Lynne Watson, was found. Watson lives in the island state of Tasmania, south of the Australian mainland.

Having now been in contact, Montgomery said Watson is grateful to soon have her brother's hat returned.

Montgomery speculated how the hat found its way to Warrensburg.

"My initial theory was that, considering that Americans and Australians served together in Vietnam, that a lot of in-trading went on between the two," Montgomery said. "My theory is that he most likely traded his hat for some other trinket from a US soldier. Not sure exactly how it ended up in Warrensburg, Missouri, but alas, it's here."

On Sun, 4 Oct 2020 at 12:25, Nicholas Montgomery sent the following...

Dear Mr. Dignam;

I wish to inform you that Mr. Connell's hat is currently on its way home to his sister.

I'd like to thank you again for your Association's help with this great task. I was scared that I would have hit a dead end in my investigations but with your help, I was able to return Connell's hat home. It was a bit expensive but no price can be measured when doing the right thing. I've often wanted a slouch hat for my hat collection but I can't own something that doesn't belong to me.

As an American, I would like to thank everyone of the 131st and the ANZAC military for their service. It might not be much but sometimes knowing a friend is there makes a world of difference. Ever since I heard "I was Only 19", I felt that plight of combating PTS and coming home to a different society. I was often taught in school how horribly Vietnam veterans were treated in the US, I'm glad one person in Australia cared to spread awareness through a song.

I apologize for rambling, I am just very grateful that all of you are here to share your stories and help the world through education of what those times were like. Again, I could never thank you enough for helping me with this momentous challenge of reconnecting family history. I hope you have a great day and that the 131 prospers further.

Grahame Dignam's response... Sincerely;

Nicholas Montgomery

On behalf of all the 131 Members, thank you Nicholas for being interested and caring enough to make the efforts you did.

You made some friends over here and we will remember you. Kind regards, Grahame Dignam

Kind regards, Grahame Dignam

...then Lynn e Watson wrote

Lynne Watson 30.10.2020

Hi everyone,

Wonderful news, the hat has arrived safely with no damage. Please find attached photos, including one of Les before he left for Vietnam. Also, the stereo he had while he was there, and the returned hat. I wish to thank each of you for your help and kindness, along with the photos that have been forwarded to me.

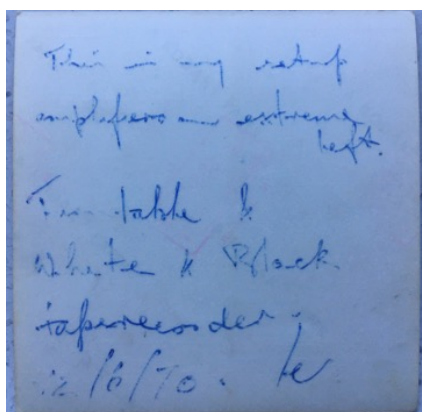
Kind regards, and thankyou again,
Lynne Watson

Les' notes re: his Tape Recorder –

This is what he wrote →

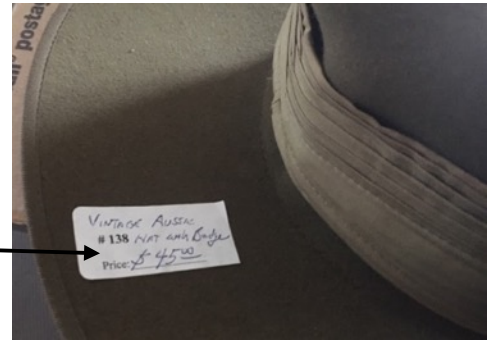
"This is my setup – amplifiers on the extreme left.

Turn table & white and black tape recorder 12/6/70"





“Vintage Aussie hat and badge
Price \$45.00 (US)



The Puggaree –



The Puggaree is the cloth band around the Australian “Slouch Hat”.

The term ‘Puggaree’ originates from the Hindu word, ‘Pagri,’ meaning a turban or thin scarf of muslin.

The current puggaree has seven pleats, one for each state and one for the Australian Territories. It is made from light khaki coloured cotton and is worn on the slouch hat with a unit colour patch sewn on the right side.

Des Bailey – Did his time with us in SVN with RAEME from 13.05.1967 to 14.05.1968. However, the DVA had Des RTA’ing on the **12th May**. So, he took up the cudgel and got the incorrect information corrected – here’s the details...

Des has sought to have his Tour of Duty in South Vietnam corrected, and the following forms the basis for this correction demand.

Des departed for SVN on 12, May, 1967 and below the extract DVA Nominal Roll (31 October, 2020) still shows Des ending his Tour on 14 March, 1968 – why is this not updated?

Unit History

Unit Name	Start Date	End Date
Detachment, 131 Divisional Locating Battery Workshop	12 May 1967	14 Mar 1968

The following is an Extract from RAEME Monthly Report, May, 1968 – this shows Des RTA-ing from SVN on 12 May 1968.

PERSONNEL

3. 1732807 Cfn J BOTHWELL arrived this location on 16 ^{APR} ~~May~~ 68.
18687 Sgt D J BAILEY RTA on 12 May 68. Except for the replacement
for Sgt BAILEY the change over of personnel has been completed.



Reference: OCA/OUT/2019/BQ8946984

FOI 308/18/19 STATEMENT OF REASONS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

1. I refer to the application by Mr Desmond Bailey under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act), for a section 48 amendment to his Defence Service Record. Under section 48 of the FOI Act, a person may apply to an agency for amendment or annotation of documents of the agency that contain personal information that is incomplete, incorrect, out of date or misleading.
2. Mr Bailey seeks to amend his Defence Service Record to show the date of his Return to Australia from Vietnam as 14 May 1968.

FOI DECISION MAKER

3. I am the authorised officer pursuant to section 23 of the FOI Act to make a decision on this FOI request.

DECISION

4. On the basis of the reasons set out below, I have decided to agree to Mr Bailey's request to amend his Defence Service Record.

MATERIAL TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

5. In making my decision, I had regard to:
 - a. the terms of the request
 - b. the content of the identified documents in issue
 - c. relevant provisions in the FOI Act
 - d. the Guidelines published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner under section 93A of the FOI Act (the Guidelines)
 - e. information provided by the applicant
 - f. searches undertaken by Army Headquarters
 - g. a review of the applicant's personal file.

REASONS FOR DECISION

6. Mr Bailey requested that his service record be amended to show a Return to Australia date of 14 May 1968. His *Record of Service* currently states the following with regard to his service:

2

Keyword	Detail	Date
OSEAS	Empl SAIGON	14 Mar 68
	Depl First Port of Call SYDNEY	14 Mar 68
SPEC SER	Special Service VIET NAM (Southern Zone) to inclusive	14 Mar 68

7. Section 50 of the FOI Act permits an agency to amend a document only where the decision maker is satisfied that the document is:
 - (a) the record of personal information to which the request relates is contained in a document of the agency or an official document of the Minister, as the case may be; and
 - (b) the information is incomplete, incorrect, out of date or misleading; and
 - (c) the information has been used, is being used or is available for use by the agency or Minister for an administrative purpose;.

8. In determining whether to amend a record, the Guidelines require:

7.37 *A decision to amend a record must be supported by a finding that the record is incorrect, incomplete, out of date or misleading (s50). This requires a decision maker to undertake a reasonable investigation and to assess the available evidence. ...*

7.38 *... If an applicant can produce a document that supports the request, they should do so. An agency should also search its own records or other sources to find any evidence supporting an applicant's claims. The applicant's opinion is not determinative; it is for the agency to be reasonably satisfied that the applicant's claims are correct.*

7.39 *An agency or minister need not conduct a full, formal investigation into the matters that an applicant claims are incorrect or misleading. An investigation is required that is adequate to enable the agency or minister to be reasonably satisfied that an applicant's claims are either correct or incorrect, justified or not justified.*

9. Mr Bailey provided copies of his *Incoming Passenger Card* and two Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Monthly Reports (RAEME Monthly Report) prepared by Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery Workshop (Nui Dat SVN) for May 1968.

10. The *Incoming Passenger Card* is stamped 14 MAY 1968 AUSTRALIA SYDNEY (KINGSFORD SMITH) AIRPORT SYDNEY. The RAEME Monthly Report dated 1 May 1968 states at paragraph 9: *Sgt Bailey. ... moved with the "Alpha" system on operation "Complete Victory". Sgt Bailey has since returned to this unit.* The second, undated RAEME Monthly Report states at paragraph 3: *18687 Sgt D J BAILEY RTA on 12 May 1968.*

11. The *Incoming Passenger Card* has been corroborated against publicly available passenger cards for the period January to June 1968 available through the National Archives of Australia. Similarly, the two RAEME Monthly Reports have been corroborated against records held by the Australian War Memorial.

3

12. I find that the date of 14 March 1968 shown in Mr Bailey's Record of Service for his Return to Australia from Vietnam is incorrect.

13. The documents provided by Mr Bailey, and the searches undertaken by Army Headquarters, confirm that Mr Bailey returned to Australia from Vietnam on 14 May 1968 and that his Special Service in Vietnam (Southern Zone) should be amended to 12 May 1968 consistent with the RAEME Monthly Report. In accordance with section 51B(1) of the FOI Act, I agree to amend Mr Bailey's *Record of Service* to indicate:

Keyword	Detail	Date
OSEAS	Empl SAIGON Depl First Port of Call SYDNEY	unconfirmed 14 May 68
SPECSER	Special Service VIET NAM (Southern Zone) to inclusive	12 May 68

14. Should Mr Bailey be able to provide evidence of his confirmed emplanement date from Saigon, this can be considered for a further amendment to his Service Record.



MP Cochbain
COL
Accredited Decision Maker
Army

20 December 2019

Bob Wilson – sent the following in, which is a great "Recollection" piece. Amazing what is kept after so much time...

"Hi Paul,

I was going through some old correspondence and found an old word file which listed those of us lucky enough to holiday at camp Coral.

Missing from the list was Gary Leplaw.

Are you able to check if he was included in the list for the UCG.?

I'm going to attempt to attach that file, my computer skills aren't that flash

Hope you are well? Regards Bob"

I did respond and confirmed his question.

For your information -

Det 131 Div Loc Bty, FSPB "Coral" 68. 12 May till 6 June

Det 131 SOP's for manning on operations;

Radar – 14 men (included 2 RAEME)

LP – 4 men

(Forward) TFAIO – 5 men

Note: all above were variable depending on available manpower.

The Allied operation Thuan Thang (Complete Victory) began on the 21 April 68 and culminated at FSPB Coral, FSPB Coogee, and FSPB Balmoral and finished on 6 June 68.

The following elements of Det 131 arrived at Coral which was located in the Bien Hoa province SVN, on 12 May 68:

1 Radar (14 men)

2 LP's (7 men)

TFAIO (4 men)

Note: Radar manning was also used to augment LP's and TFAIO's during operations.

12 May – One LP walked back 1200 M to join 161 Fd Bty who due to operational procedures (Stuff up) were unable to consolidate at Coral. This area received incoming and although not specifically stated was later referred to as part of Coral.

13 May (AM) – 3 replacements arrived from Nui Dat

OC and 3 replacements arrived from Long binh American Base

5 members returned to Nui Dat. 2 for RTA, 2 for R@C, 1 for medical reason

13 May – 161 Fd Bty along with LP move to FSPB Coogee (the forgotten base) established by 3 RAR

24 May – FSPB Coogee abandoned with 3 RAR establishing FSPB Balmoral, with 161 Bty and LP returning to Coral

5 June - Balmoral was abandoned,

6 June - Coral was abandoned, ending Operation Thuan Thang...

Please Note... There was no official list in unit records as to the members who were at Coral. Numbers of persons was recorded for ration purposes.

The following list of people and their duties was compiled by me in 1998 this was result of extensive research and contacting many of the members concerned, with the end result being this list. This list I believe to be 98% accurate and as such is accepted by the Australian Army History Unit as being an official list. **There may be two or three people whom we have not yet accounted for?**

MANNING

RND = Return to Nui Dat. RTA = Return to Australia. R&C = Rest and Comfort Leave (Vung Tau)

Section/ Names	State	Comments
TFAIO (attached to 12 Fd Regt Tac HQ)		
Capt. Phil Perrin	WA	OC Det 131
Sgt Jim Lawler ,	NSW	(Deceased)
Gnr Ian Kennedy	Vic	
Gnr Geoff Blackwell	Vic	RND on 13May 68 for RTA
Gnr Alan Robb	WA	
Gnr Peter McKie	NSW	
Gnr Robert Wilson	Vic	
Radar Section		
2/Lt Gordon Williams	NSW?	Radar Sec Commander
Bdr Keith Ayliffe (Act. Sgt.)	Qld	Radar Sec Sgt
L/Bdr Frank Pepper		(Deceased) Radar No.2
Bdr Colin Gordon	SA	RND on 13May 68 for R&C
L/Bdr Ian Finlay	Qld	RND on 13May 68 for R&C
Gnr Wal Franklin	NSW	
Gnr Ian Amos	NSW	
Gnr Gordon Malcolm	NSW	
Gnr Dennis Dye	NSW	
Gnr Ken Jones	NSW	
Gnr John Ianson	NSW	
Gnr Alan McDonald	WA	
Gnr Tony Coutts		(Deceased)
Gnr Phil "Doc" Sheedy	Qld	RND on 13May 68 for Medical
Gnr Vic Claxton	SA	
LP 31C:		
L/Bdr Peter Dealy	Vic	OC's driver
L/Bdr Eric Marques	Qld	RND on 13May 68 for RTA
Gnr Michael Bohl		(Deceased)

Gnr Murray Smaile	NSW	
LP 31E:		
Gnr John Dellaca	Vic	
Bdr Neville Wortlehook	WA	
Gnr Ken Piesley	Qld	(Deceased)
Gnr Stan Briggs	Qld	
Gnr John Bayford	Vic	
Radar Mech.		
Cpl Strautins - RAEME	NSW?	
Cpl McNeill (RAEME)	NSW?	
Pte Stephen Palmer (RAEME)		Deceased

...**Ed** – I extracted the following from Nev Wortlehook's Locators Profile which gives another "Recollection" of his Coral time -

"I was told I was off to Vietnam on the 20th April 1968, but had it delayed until the 30th. **John Dellaca** must have called me names when he was told his replacement was being delayed? Went to SVN to replace John, as he was at FSB Anderson I was sent there for the change-over, then we enjoyed Coral/Balmoral for the 6 weeks."

There is much more in Nev's Locator Profile – they're great to rediscover.

...Anyone else got anything to add to Bob's recollection bit?

Ian Campbell – "I have this in my 35mm collection so guess I took it. It was the demolition of the accommodation tent on the top of SAS hill at Nui Dat.

I was with 131 from Feb 1971 until reassignment to 12th Fld Bty in early June 1971.

The monkeys had squirted so much piss on the tent that it smelt disgusting and was so rotten that you could poke your finger through the canvas.

See attached a few more pics from the working bee on the day.

Regards...Ian"

This was in last month's Eyes & Ears -

Another "Memory" Tester – I discovered this photo amongst my download archives and for the life of me I can't remember "where, what, why..." Can someone give me a hand, please?

Ian's additional photos...



At left – Self - note the Fire drum in the back





At right – local inhabitants already moving in!

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...

Terry Westerway – “Good Morning Paul,

I was interested in the letter sent by **Graham Williams** re the surveillance radar in 1969/1970.

In 1965, the unit was given a device referred to as a “Doppler radar” to try out. It was a parabolic dish on a small stand and powered (I think) by a car battery. It was supposed to be deployed to detect movement along roads and tracks. It could only detect movement towards or away from the device. I think the operator listened to sound on a set of earphones – a rising pitch in the sound indicated movement towards the radar and a lowering pitch indicated movement away from

the radar (i.e. the "Doppler Effect"). We did not have the device for long and I don't think we were ever told what became of the device.

You might ask Barry Campton if he recalls the device – or even "Paddy" Gowans might remember? Terry."

Bill Finlay – "Hi Paul, thanks for your continued efforts to keep us oldies up to date, I have been sick over the last few months suffering around 7 mini strokes, hospitalised twice and fixed up by the magnificent folk at the RNS neurology ward.

With regards to the photo of the 1965 footy team I can name most of them, I feel sure Deano could remember the ones I don't.

Back Row left to right. Norm Bullen, Tom Checkley, ???, Coach???, Barry Bonser, ???.

Front Row left to right, Merv Blair?, ???, Mal Ewart, Hugh Hoddy, Alan Campbell, Deano.

I am surprised that I don't see Ian Board. Anyways keep up the good work, regards, Bill."

Ed: Here's my only crack at it – front row from left **Barry Nugent**.



...now, as coincidence would have it, here a follow on from above -

Barry Nugent - "Hi Paul,

Long-time no hear, mate when I went to Nam I left all my gear with a Bombardier Murray, I forget his last name now, but he came home early because of wife troubles. When we came home I could not find him and the army would not tell me, so I lost a lot of memorabilia, photos of my football days in Canberra and in the army.

When I saw this photo I'm the one on the other end from Keith Dean. I was wondering if you could contact them to see if I could get a copy of that photo. I would pay all costs.

Hoping you can help mate. Barry"

If anyone could help Barry out, then please drop me a line. Paul Dickson - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

Bill Taggart – a sad note to Grahame Dignam...

"30.09.20 As you are aware, I have often had to inform you of sad news about some member of our 1/83rd family. Well I have some bad news of my own to share. My sister passed away last week. Janet was 56 and had Down Syndrome. She also, over the past 2+ years, developed severe dementia. Janet lived with another of my sisters in Philadelphia. We have been expecting this for some time, particularly over the past few weeks. So, while it is still so sad for all us, it was not unexpected.

I usually ask you to keep the effected person and family in your prayers. In this case, I would ask for your prayers for our family during this difficult time. I don't think that Janet is in need of prayers because if she did not see God the moment she drew her last breath there is no hope for any of us.

One other thing I wanted to tell you. One of our group, Ray Spence who was the Battalion XO in 1968, had a daughter who also had Down Syndrome. I spoke with Ray many times over the years mainly about his daughter and my sister. Ray was a great source of guidance and comfort over the years when I questioned him on what we might expect to happen as Janet aged. I never once stumped Ray on a question and his input was very valuable to our family. Speaking with Ray was a great source of comfort as well, we could see we were in this together. I will always be grateful for Ray's kindness and support. Ray's daughter passed away a few years ago and I am pretty sure that she and Janet must have met up by now and are having some laughs together.

If any of you find yourself in a similar situation and have any questions that I can help you with please let me know. I would just be passing on the torch that Ray carried for me. Thanks, Bill"

Grahame's response to Bill...

"30.09.20. On behalf of your Aussie pals our condolences go out to you and your family, Bill on the loss of Janet. You carry on caring loving and looking after Janet's' needs only for it to be in vain. It may be an escape for Janet but she is surely in a better place. And it is for the family to remember and honour her. Your feelings of loss will mingle with the good memories over time and you need to carry on for your own family's sake.

Be assured that the larger family of veterans you currently nurture will have you in their thoughts and supporting you at this trying time.

Kind regards,

Grahame Dignam, Secretary / Treasurer, 131 Locators Assn Inc ABN 92 663 816 973

...and Bill's response -

"2.1.20. Thanks Grahame, I appreciate your condolences for my Sister and your kind words. The outpouring of responses I have received is so much appreciated. Bill"



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...

Phillip Mulgrew – "Hi Paul

It's good to hear that you're getting out and about, playing golf and getting to the restaurants. One of our sons, Daniel who live and works in Sandgate, shouted us out to lunch at the former Sandgate Post Office a few weeks ago, which was converted to a restaurant some time back. He was paying us back for all the times he would drop in unexpectedly for dinner and I had no time to hide the beer!

Seriously, I'm glad you're coming good after your operation. I believe your carcinoma is a form of skin cancer. Wear a big sombrero, Right.

Thankfully the weather is warming up here, 34 degrees today and most of the following week in the middle to high 20's. The spring storms are upon us, and if you don't have a steel roof on your place, especially on the south side of Brissie in certain areas, you're in for a whole lot of hurt. The last storms that blew through the south side produced hail up to 135 mm diameter, but most were the size of cricket balls, which was worrying enough. Needless to say, lots of damaged vehicles left in the open and smashed roof tiles around the Springfield, Redbank Plains area. If it's not obvious, we live in the northern suburbs in a house with a tin roof near Moreton Bay.

The cell doors are starting to swing open in NSW and Victoria, with the easing of restrictions, so hopefully we may get some southern family members, in our case, sons and their wives and grandkids, making their way up to Brisbane for a holiday, either around Christmas or shortly after.

Look after yourself and the family. Phil."

Harry Lynas – "Hey Paul,

Doesn't time fly? Nothing much has changed since I last wrote to you just following all the safety rules associated with this virus and staying home as much as possible. In a couple of weeks that is all I'll be able to do as I am having my left hip replaced on 17th November and then I might be able to live a pain free life.

We have also had good rain here in SE Qld and everything is green again - it doesn't take long. I also went out to a Melbourne Cup Day lunch at one of the local clubs and it was nice to sit down and have a meal in good company and a few beers too.

The current edition of *Eyes and Ears* has a long story with photos of our visit to 20 Regiment last month and I totally enjoyed myself, meeting up again with locators I knew, and meeting quite a few new ones. We finished off with a Formal Dinner in Gallipoli Barracks Officers' Mess and I arrived home just before 12 o'clock. A very enjoyable day but a very long one.

That's all for now, catch up again in 3 months' time when I will have a new hip and be able to walk freely again.

Cheers, Harry"

Russell Jackson – "Hello Paul,

Thank you for the mail.

Both of us are well and you might say reasonably accustomed to our new way of living.

Most shopping is done on-line apart from some minor items where we mask up and head for the shops.

We attempt to do this at quiet times however as restrictions are easing the quiet times are becoming more difficult to find. I haven't seen the inside of a Barber's shop since late February with Margot developing expertise in shearing on the back deck.

Medical appointments have been conducted using telehealth although like you I have had visits for skin cancer treatment and

am due for further excisions early in December. I have lost count of the number of carcinomas I have had removed with the scalp being an ongoing concern.

On Monday, we are taking advantage of the runout deals being offered by VW Australia and will be attempting to get the best deal on a Golf wagon for Margot.

I still have the Golf R and as part of the runout offerings there is a further \$500.00 discount on a new car for those who already own a Golf.

COVID restrictions mean that our visit to the dealership is by appointment only with masks a mandatory requirement.

Speaking of masks, I am still trying to work out why so many are worn just over the mouth or in many cases on the chin.

About as useful as the hearing aids of my late father in law which were always in his pocket.
The local Football team, the Geelong Cats made it to the Grand Final in the restricted AFL season that was run through player hubs in Queensland.

We made a game of it in the first half and had a handy lead however we were totally overrun in the second half by a very dominant Richmond.

Always next year for another crack at the Premiership but the loss this year has had a noticeable effect on town morale which has already taken a fair whack.

We are missing travel and have no real idea when we will be able to catch up with our grandchildren in Sweden.

Facetime is not the same as personal contact.

Normally we would see them at least once a year during their summer or have them visit during ours. The chances for 2021 are not looking good for a trip in either direction.

House maintenance is an item for us now that the weather is improving and we are currently involved with tree trimmers and fencers.

Some expensive plumbing work to remove tree roots from storm water drains was attempted last week although it was only partially successful with pipes needing to be replaced at a later date.

Plumbers sure do know how to charge.

Continuing maintenance is an issue with our older property and we are looking, as we have been for a little while, for a downsizing opportunity before the retirement village calls.

Margot is a very keen gardener and with the good rains we have had our garden is looking lush with its spring growth and blooms. The roses have been a highlight,

If we downsize I know she will miss the extensive garden we currently have.

I trust that you have an easing into the colder weather and that the golf course will remain on your agenda for some time yet.

Thanks again for keeping in touch with us. Regards Russell"

John Dellaca – "Hi Paul, thanks for your catch-up email. Pleased to hear all's well with you and your family.

Hope you're healing well after your recent surgery and are coping with all the sanitizing etc. It sure has been a year of challenges.

We are a little luckier in Regional Victoria with regards to Melbourne's Hard Lockdown. We had our first day trip away last Monday to Warrnambool this is the first time leaving Ballarat in 6 months. I have been working on my cars before winter really set in, also putting an album together of my time in Vietnam, gave the local photo shop a kick along by taking in some 400 slides to be converted to digital media. We babysit several days a week as both parents are working, one from home.

A Group of us are assisting our oldest RSL member, he is 97 and still lives at home, alone. He has refused any help from DVA etc. We have a roster to share with outings, Meals etc. He normally is very social and found it extremely difficult to change his busy way of life.

Hopefully we will have some kind of normality in the next few weeks/months. It's amazing just how fast the year has gone, we were planning to visit our Son in England this July but had not purchased the tickets, we were very lucky or things could have been somewhat more stressful.

I have kept myself fit and healthy by playing golf twice a week with a group of Viet Vets applying the Covid rules of course!!!

We'll keep in touch my friend and stay safe. Great to hear from you from your part of the world. John Dellaca.

Russ Hamsey – "Paul:

Good to hear you're okay. COVID has been rather tough on your side of the world.

Things have been busy over the last three months. The Regt is doing very well.

131 Bty is currently in Wide Bay doing their own training and shortly will be supporting the final STA Wing course of the year.

132 Bty has just returned home from Op Resolute. They have spent the last several months flying over 800 hours with Shadow in support of border protection ops.

CSS Bty has been busy supporting the entire unit.

The Regt continues to push Shadow far beyond what was originally intended. This year the unit has flown over civilian land and in civilian airspace for the first time.

The future is looking pretty good with the project to replace Shadow in high gear. We are expecting the decision by Government on which system will replace Shadow by mid-2021.

In the meantime, work continues to prepare for the future. Plans for the re-raising of 133 Bty will feature prominently in the next months.

Busy times as always.

Take care and stay safe, Russ."

Iain Kennedy – "Paul,

Good to hear from you, happy to hear you're avoiding the dreaded Covid 19. We have just been released from the toughest lockdown (globally) for this virus. Luckily this lockdown is a doddle compared to our lockdown in Vietnam.

There we had Akai 6" reel to reel tape recorder and a Canon 35mm camera, that was it. Now we have all that and more in our mobile phone. Due to Covid cannot visit customers and cannot travel more than 5kms (until last week) the car as got very low Kms this year, so plan to keep it an extra year. So, fitted bike racks on it so I can take the bikes to more bike friendly locations. Fitted the side mirrors with sequential indicator lights and added some go faster stripes. I'm thinking I might chip it to increase the power output. It's out of warranty so no issue. Last time I was caught out by Mercedes as I'd chipped a car that was still under warranty and Mercedes removed it.

With the good weather on our doorstep, the bike has been tuned up and the riding gear prepared ready for a bumper season. Already have the best kms on the bike in 5 years.

Despite lockdown the printing industry has been going strong and my agency has had a better than average period. If it keeps going like this I might have to consider putting my retirement back another 5 years (ha ha!)

Janet and I are well, enjoying getting out for a meal and a coffee. It tastes different in a cafe than it does at home. Still many projects around the house and garden, but with stores closed until last week couldn't get the things needed. So, we start again, Now!

No Anzac Day, no Vietnam Veteran's Day and no Remembrance Day, means no catch-ups this year and maybe even not next. Until we all get vaccinated.

Stay healthy, stay safe.

Cheers, Iain K"

Ron Mason – "G-day Paul, as I said at the zoom meeting I would reply after 11/11 - my time does get away.

Everything is going fine here, canola is off & in the silo & wheat is looking good - we will count that one when it is in the silo as well! Current forecast for tomorrow is 38c so not looking forward to that, a bit hot a bit soon.

Our movement restrictions seem to be a little more relaxed than yours - yes masks on but we can both go to the supermarket at the same time - if we would like too!

My knowledge of Mexico is very non-existent. So have often wondered where you guys hang out. Not down near that rough weather that is coming in at the moment I hope.

Just back to the 11/11 for a moment. Dookie RSL held a small service at 11am with only 10 at the memorial as per the rules on public meetings at the moment, any others that arrived stood on the other side of a small road so did not count. Being secretary /treasurer of Dookie RSL I somehow got the job of MC & guest speaker - it was a very short service.

That's about all for the moment so as we tend to say now

Stay safe, Ron."

John "Kanga" McFadden – "Dicko,

I've been watching the viral & political madness sweeping through your region.

Keep your head down Little Buddy!

May you & your family stay safe in this turmoil. Kanga"

"HELP is at hand* –

Bert Blink forwarded the following clipping taken from The Canberra Times which was placed by **Darren Chester, MP, Minister Veterans' and Defence Personnel** with regards to the current **Special Operations Task Groups** accusations and the flow-on effect to present and past ADF community in general...

Help is at hand

In the wake of the release of the Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force's Inquiry into Afghanistan, there has been plenty of media commentary quick to judge our servicemen and women.

We can't allow the alleged actions of a few people to stain the reputations and the service of more than two million Australians who have done their duty with distinction.

They are the first people we turn to when things get difficult or too big for state authorities, such as last summer's bushfires and the response do the COVID-19 pandemic. And they keep us safe in an ever-changing world.

If you know a serving ADF member, or a veteran, please show them your support. If you are an ADF member, or a veteran, or one of the many families that support them, I would also ask you to please reach out if you need someone to talk to.

For all current ADF members and their families, the Defence all-hours Support Line is a confidential telephone and online service and is available on 1800 628 036. For all current and former ADF members, and their families, Open Arms provides 24-hour free

and confidential counselling and support on 1800 011 046.

Open Arms also has support available through SafeZone and when you call, it is up to you how much or how little personal information you share. This is available on 1800 142 072.

Darren Chester MP, Minister Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel

This activity was instigated by email communications with a group from the 131 Locators Association and the following link, also supplied by Bert - <https://www.voiceofaveteran.org/> - gains you entry to the “Voice of a Veteran” website where you can join a petition to show your support of unfairness to pre-emptive actions taken against ADF personnel based on **allegations**.

This Association group all signed the petition.

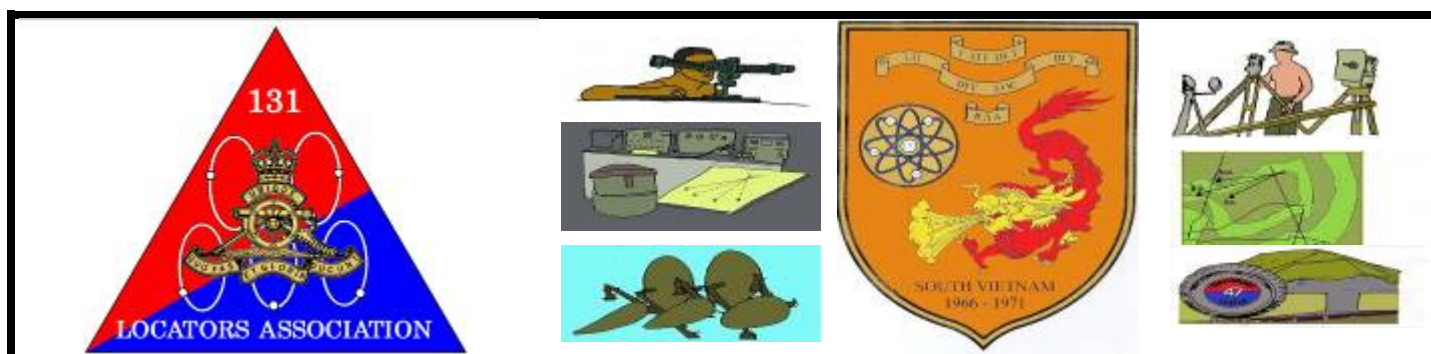
The following was extracted from the “Voice of a Veteran” website also -

“Maintain the Memory of our Meritorious ‘Many’

The Chief of the Defence Force has stated that he will ask the Governor General of Australia to strip the Meritorious Unit Citation awarded to Task Force 66, Special Operations Task Groups who served during the period 30 April 2007 - 31 December 2013. This will impact over 3000 Special Operations personnel including the families of those heroes who have died in combat. Show your support for common sense and help us stop this persecution of ‘the many’ who served with honour.”

Ed - The belief that innocence prevails until guilt is proven seems entirely skewed in this case.

Please show some support for any ADF personnel you know.



Committee members:

President – Allen Morley, Vice President – Bert Blink, Treasurer/Secretary – Grahame Dignam,
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 – Alan Adams, WA - Barry Guzder
<http://www.131locators.org.au>

Presidential perambulations

A successful AGM for 131 Locators Association Inc. The November meeting was held with a combination of physical presence at the Kokoda Memorial Walk in Concord, Sydney and via zoom. This combination worked, but not necessarily well. More information on the previous year's actions are contained elsewhere in this edition.

I want to thank particularly Grahame Dignam, Paul Dickson, Bert Blink and Gordon Malcolm, all of whom were re-elected to the Association Committee Executive positions, for their significant contributions. Also acknowledged are our Committee members and State Representatives who collectively have helped us get through this difficult year. And a note of appreciation to our *Eyes and Ears* and Facebook reading audience for sticking with us over the last ten years.

A group of us – Graham Dignam, Paul Dickson, Bob Billiards, Ernie Newbold, Nick Proskurin, Ian Amos and Allen Morley - met in Grahame Dignam's house back in 2009 to plan the birth of this Association. One important aspect of the discussion was the probable 'life' of the Association. Our assessment was about ten years, simply because the organising group by that stage would be in our mid-70s.

That time is now with us and has passed remarkably quickly. For our core, the next biggest celebration will be turning 80 in the period 2025 to 2026. Maybe we will at that stage be dependent on a Zimmer frame and liquid meals. Maybe not. But clearly the task of managing the Association, reporting annually to the NSW Department of Fair Trading, producing *Eyes and Ears* each month and doing the other necessary tasks will be a huge challenge. Hence, I have suggested that maybe we could celebrate Vic Danko's 80th birthday – January 1, 2025 – by winding up our Association on that date. At this stage that is not a Committee decision, merely a target. In the absence of our younger members taking over the reins and responsibilities it appears to me to be practical timing.

Any comments on this suggestion should be sent to Dicko at 131eyesandears@gmail.com.

Regards

Allen

Grahame Dignam, Association Secretary/Treasurer adds a couple of words - "Thanks to all who have contributed in any small way and have made 2020 the year to remember. Let's make 2021 a monumental one we will never forget"

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 8th December, 2020 at 1100hrs

Venue: hopefully at Canley Heights RSL but we will confirm. Zoom link will be advised.

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 following the **Annual General Meeting at Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway:** Tuesday, 12th November, 2020 at 1105hrs...

Attendees were:

Via ZOOM

Ron Mason, Paul Dickson, Bert Blink

Terry Erbs, then in the shadows
Grahame Dignam, Bob Billiards, Ian
Amos, Allen Morley, Gordon Malcolm,
Merv Nairn, Ged Carroll and then at far
right Steve Wynn



Somewhere in there is
the gang running the show!

The Annual General Meeting –

President's Report for FY 2019 - 2020

I am pleased to be able to present the President's Report for the financial year 2019/2020. This period represents our ninth full-year of operation and overall shows a continuing trend in most aspects of the Association's activities.

The Association remains financial, viable and sustainable for the foreseeable future as the financial report illustrates. The ageing of our members continues to be our limiting factor. Many of the early Nashos have celebrated their 74th birthdays and others will do so within a year or two. Contact with those who served in the Detachment and those who served at Holsworthy remains incomplete, although there has been some success with new contacts in the past year.

Although not producing any known direct health issues amongst members, in 2020 the corona virus changed significantly our established meeting program. We have adopted zoom as our means of active communication in the absence of physical contact.

The Association website, www.131locators.org.au continues to provide both a web presence and a defined identity. During the reporting period, external access to the website has grown. Bob Billiards has continued as our Webmaster, providing an essential role in doing so, and has been ably supported by Bert Blink. Thank you, Bob and Bert.

The site statistics are regularly reported in *Eyes and Ears* and demonstrate the ongoing interest in our activities. The international list of countries where searches of each *Eyes and Ears* edition are made represents a real scattering. During the reporting period a Facebook presence was established. It has become very popular and has directly resulted in some of our unlocated locators being located. Bob, your effort in setting up this communication mechanism is much appreciated.

Eyes and Ears, under the editorial overview of Paul Dickson, appears monthly, and still delivers editions of 18-20 pages. I believe that together the size and frequency are major measures of our Association's success. Members' contributions illustrate that we are recording more of relevance from our military past for both history and information. The June 2020 edition was the 142nd in the new series.

Only a limited number of activities, meetings, reunions and events were possible in the latter part of the year's program. Highlights for 2019-2020 were:

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

. production and publication by Dicko of 32 Locator Profiles; we would appreciate more being submitted to assist our recording of 131 history

. At the end of June 2020 there were 132 members of the Association together with 33 lapsed. This suggests that we are just maintaining membership levels. Introduction of ZOOM-based regular Committee meetings to manage the Association and enable the involvement of Regional Representatives to help spread the load. Solo personal Anzac Day recognitions took place, although social follow up in each State was not permitted

A special mention for those Committee members who made things happen for the Association. Bert Blink continued in the role of Vice-President and is generous of his time in attending our Committee meetings, driving from Canberra each in 2019. Bert has subsequently been a regular attendee at the new format meetings

Grahame Dignam, Treasurer/Secretary, has been the "super glue" for the Association's financial arrangements, records and operation of the membership database. Grahame passed on the Public Officer responsibilities to Gordon Malcolm. Ernie Newbold, Nick Proskurin other Committee Members, Ian Amos, George Lane, Merv Nairn and Ged Carroll are all acknowledged for their ongoing involvement and support.

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

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

Allen Morley

September 2020

The Election of office-bearers for the 2020-21 year.

Allen Morley declared all positions vacant and the election proceeded.

The Chair was handed to Grahame Dignam during this portion of the meeting.

Nominations for the positions of President (Allen Morley), Vice President (Bert Blink), Public Officer Gordon Malcolm and Secretary/Treasurer (G Dignam) were received and as all were prepared to stand again and were unopposed were duly elected for the new term.

The committee namely George Lane, Ged Carroll, Ian Amos, Bob Billiards, Merv Nairn, Ern Newbold and Nick Proskurin also elected to stand again as a group.

As no new nominations were received the group being unopposed were duly elected for the new term.

The chair of the meeting was passed back to the new President- elect Allen Morley for the balance of the meeting.

The regional Representatives who were appointed and are not elected and so continue in their roles.

President-elect Allen Morley expressed his appreciation to Paul Dickson especially, for his continued efforts in publishing the *Eyes & Ears* regularly.

Mr. Morley also expressed his appreciation to Bert Blink and Bob Billiards for their commitment as Vice President and Website administrator and for all the committee who actively assisted during the busy year.

Appointment of Auditor. Jim Fitzgerald has indicated that he would be available to act as Auditor for the Association for the 2020/21 financial year.

Financial Membership is currently ...**118**, plus Associates 2, Affiliates 12. Total **132**. Lapsed as at 1.11.20 **41** members.

Then to the General Meeting –

Presidents report.

Allen advised that:

. Keith Ayliffe and John Posener had formally handed the copyright of Tracks of the Dragon to the LSTAA and then it would pass to 131 Battery. This action would preclude any reprint of the original.

. Material is being collected on 132 Battery with a view to doing a project in the future.

. A document has been prepared by Paul Dickson which addresses the winding up of our 131 Locators Association around 2025. At that time "we that grow old" may have lost the inclination to keep on doing our roles. We need to prepare for the next step to ensure our legacy is not lost. It is possible the AWM may be interested?

. webmaster Update.

Bob advised the Face book page now has 183 members.

Health.

Merv Nairn advised that Des McGuigan is in care at the Moran Engadine facility.

Remembrance Day activities have been severely restricted and will be a low key observance this "COVID19" year.

General Business and around the grounds.

Discussions ensued on the following:

.On the Website the DOD of Sgt James F Lawler are in question and will be investigated. It appears he was seen alive well after the date shown and verification is needed.

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

. Birthdays in the Battery...December –

Date	Name	Service No	YoB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	DAVID DOUGHERTY	2786594	1946	17 01 1968	04 02 1969	
1	KEVEN BUSH	3792069	1946	18 02 1968	21 02 1969	
1	NEVILLE SMITH	1734352	1946	01 07 1969	25 03 1970	
3	RAYMOND MINNS	4410744	1941	20 05 1966	28 02 1967	† 24.05.1997
3	CLIVE DREIS	2785766	1945	05 02 1968	03 12 1968	
6	ALAN ROBB	5715343	1946	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	
7	ANTHONY O'MARA	38334	1940	15 03 1968	18 03 1969	RAEME † 01.01.1985
7	TERRY WESTERWAY	215818	1945	04 05 1966	07 05 1967	
8	ROBERT BARNETT WHITE	311537	1937	22 04 1966	16 05 1967	† 1992
9	ANDREW OPIE 2Lt.	43611	1944	04 05 1966	06 01 1967	
10	HANS WEBER	3789591	1945	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	† 12.07.2016
12	MICHAEL DAVIS	4720736	1948	20 01 1970	30 01 1971	
12	CHRISTOPHER BRAZIER	2792185	1948	24 02 1970	25 02 1971	
13	JOHN STANFORD	217765	1949	29 01 1969	21 01 1970	
13	LAURENCE D'ARCY	215649	1945	04 03 1968	04 02 1969	12 Fd Regt.
13	" "	215649	1945	20 05 1971	05 08 1971	131
14	PETER FLETCHER	2783429	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
14	CHRISTOPHER SELF	66981	1949	1969	1970	† UNKNOWN
14	THOMAS KING	1411018	1937	12 12 1966	12 12 1967	
15	GEOFFREY PRICE	5715931	1947	08 05 1969	25 02 1970	
16	PHILLIP PERRIN Capt.	53105	1936	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	
17	TONY GOLDSMITH	1732029	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
18	JIM HOGNO	2783680	1945	03 01 1967	27 09 1967	
18	TOM CHECKLEY	311534	1938	22 04 1966	05 08 1966	† 05.08.66 KBA
19	GEOFF BLACKWELL	4718307	1945	20 06 1967	21 05 1968	
19	PETER GAULT	2783644	1945	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	† 24.05.14
19	ALLAN BENSLEY	243104	1944	04.06.68	18.06.69	† 20.12.11
	" "			20.01.70	30.01.71	
19	RODNEY BEASLEY	3797746	1948	04 03 1971	05 08 1971	
19	MICHAEL FERRIS	1733794	1945	23 12 1968	28 03 1969	1st Armoured Regt.
	" "			30 03 1969	03 12 1969	131-RAEME
21	ROBERT RETROT	1731922	1945	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
21	MICHAEL BOYLE Lt.	217004	1946	17 02 1970	11 02 1971	
21	BLAIR SHEPPARD	1735563	1948	01 04 1970	04 03 1971	
22	JOHN MCGREGOR	3787376	1945	20 05 1966	30 04 1967	
22	MICHAEL BURGESS Capt.	242895	1938	24 03 1968	26 03 1969	RAEME
22	PETER MEANEY	4719804	1947	03 06 1969	25 03 1970	
22	RONALD RYAN	2793176	1948	19 08 1970	09 06 1971	
24	RON. EVANS	3789614	1945	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
25	STEWART MCALPINE	2787471	1946	08 07 1968	04 06 1969	
25	ROBERT HOLDSWORTH	3793058	1945	04 01 1969	03 12 1969	AACC
25	PETER BREMNER	1734544	1947	16 04 1969	16 04 1970	
26	CHRIS BOULLY	4717884	1945	17 04 1967	12 12 1967	
26	DAVID BILLINGS	2793071	1946	19 08 1970	05 05 1971	4 Fd Regt.
28	GEOF. MACAULAY WO2	35753	1936	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	† 27.04.13
28	LIONEL OUTEN	1732195	1945	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
28	JOHN MARTIN Lt.	43613	1941	25 02 1968	21 02 1969	
29	BRIAN HAWKEY	1200572	1946	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	AACC
29	FRED LENNON Sgt.	29712	1927	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	† 25.07.13

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

Ed – 10 blokes not highlighted is rubbish! C'mon, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

More details required – Christopher Self – now, I realise we have attempted this exercise before, but I just feel we need to continue this search to put some closure to Chris's passing by adding a **Date of Death**. The following is an extract taken from the **DVA Nominal Roll** records -

Name	SELF, Christopher	Date of Birth	14 Dec 1949
Service	Australian Army	Place of Birth	HOBART TAS AUSTRALIA
Service Number	66981	Rank	Gunner
National Service	No	Corps	Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

Unit History

Unit Name	Start Date	End Date
33 Dental Unit	25 Mar 1969	18 Mar 1970

I realise, just because Chris was born in Tasmania, that it does not mean that he passed there, being in the Army he could have finally relocated to anywhere. So, I'm asking can we have another wrack of the brain cells and more searching for an answer, please. **Paul Dickson - 131eyesandears@gmail.com**

. Locator Profiles – we've received **163** and we've sent out **163**. Ed – Gee, I thought there were more blokes who served in the Battery and Detachment?

. Located...

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

Vale

Great to get Vale information confirmed...

Ian Campbell did some great Detective Inspectorial work and came up with the following –

"Hi Paul, as discussed with you last month, I did some research into missing information about our 131 members who have passed.

Limited success at this time but did find the following.

I found information on **Bensley, Alan Bruce** through newspaper notices that pointed me to Gilgandra where a chap of this name had passed in 2011. **His age at death matches with our Bensley's date of birth and a phone call to a Bensley from White Pages for the town of Gilgandra (his niece) confirmed that this chap had served in Vietnam.** The date of his passing was 20th December 2011.

Therefore, as the name matches exactly, his age at DOD matches his DOB from our records and he served in Vietnam is this OK to accept?

I did not want to go any further with other relatives.

Regards...Ian"

Ed – the web Roll of Honour has been updated. Paul

	Name: Bensley, Alan Bruce	
	Service No: 243104 Rank: Sergeant	
	SVN In: 04 06 1968 SVN Out: 18 06 1969	
	DoB: 19 12 44 DoD: 20 12 11	
	Lest We Forget	

Bert Blink gave us an update on **Jim Lawler** via a notice in the latest VVFA Newsletter correcting his Date of Death. With a bit more investigating we can confirm this correction on our behalf. Below is the updated version of our Vale and also Honour Roll showing this information.

	Name: Lawler, James Frederick	
	Service No: 28523 Rank: Sergeant	
	SVN In: 18 12 1967 SVN Out: 11 03 1970	
	DoB: 18 09 36 DoD: 14 08 20	
Lest We Forget		



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.

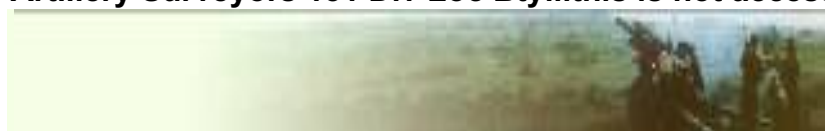
So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the *Eyes & Ears* regularly you could bite the bullet and email Grahame Dignam:sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join - Memberships are available for 1 year or longer deposit a DONATION direct (add 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...this is not accessible.



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
	<i>The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield</i>



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



www.artilleryhistory.org



Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
Honour the dead, but fight like hell for the living



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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