

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

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



A date never
to be
forgotten –
18th August

Vietnam Veterans Day

15 August 2008 by Libby Stewart (AWM)

Vietnam Veterans Day is commemorated on 18 August every year. The day was originally known as Long Tan Day, chosen to commemorate the men of D Company, 6RAR who fought in the battle of Long Tan in 1966. On that day, 108 Australian and New Zealand soldiers fought a pitched battle against over 2,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops in a rubber plantation not far from the small village of Long Tan. The Australians prevailed, but only after fighting in torrential rain for four hours. They were nearly overrun, but were saved by a timely ammunition resupply, accurate artillery fire from the nearby Australian base, and the arrival of reinforcements by armoured personnel carrier. Eighteen Australians lost their lives and 24 were wounded, the largest number of casualties in one operation since the Australian task force had arrived a few months earlier. After the battle the bodies of 245 enemy soldiers were found, but there was evidence that many more bodies had been carried away.

On the third anniversary of Long Tan, 18 August 1969, a cross was raised on the site of the battle by the men of 6RAR. Veterans from the battle gathered at the cross to commemorate the fallen, and the day was commemorated by them as Long Tan Day from then on. Over time, all Vietnam veterans adopted the day as one to commemorate those who served and died in Vietnam. In 1987, following the very successful Welcome Home parade for Vietnam veterans in Sydney, Prime Minister Bob Hawke announced that Long Tan Day would be known as Vietnam Veterans Day. Since then, it has been commemorated every year as the day on which the service of all those men and women who served in Vietnam is remembered.

Some Vietnam Veterans Day comments and photos...

Rieny Nieuwenhof – “Hi Paul,

A few images of the Geelong VV Day commemoration. It was a very quiet event with only 4 veterans permitted. Lowered the flags, laid the wreaths, recited the Ode and raised the flags. We made sure our mates were remembered. Rieny.



Geoff Blackwell – as seen on Facebook – “It's a silly COVID Viet Vets.

I sat on the memorial, got a wet arse. I'm blaming Ken (photographer), and Sally, (director)...they were both a bit sloppy. Largs Bay RSL, Adelaide”



Merv Nairn – “Gentlemen, my thoughts are with you & all our serving mates. Have a little quiet reflection, I have thought of little else this morning I miss our day together. Have the best day you can under the circumstances.”

Allen Morley – A reflection for the Day –

“Fellas

A day to think of our times at Nui Dat and things that are still front of mind. The long drop, prickly heat, stand to, not sleeping on the job, filling sandbags, ration pack food, accidental discharge, Vung Tau R&C, the R&R break, mail arriving etc.

Maybe 6 RAR feels their Long Tan day has been kidnapped, but it is important to have a focus for we veterans.

Unfortunately, we are unable to enjoy a convivial lunch and catch up.

Please think of your 131 mates and other Veterans today. Cheers, Allen”

Ernie Newbold – responded to Allen’s email...

“G’day Allen,

Thanks for your kind thoughts and memories, we may not be able to sit together this year as we usually do but my thoughts are with you and all of those who served alongside us, particularly all of our friends who were there with Detachment 131 Div Loc Bty RAA. Regards, Ernie.”

Grahame Dignam – “All,

Remembering the very different experiences of SVN of the '60s and also the memories we have been able to create since that long-ago time.

So, grateful for the chance to say "We remember them" and all our other comrades in arms.

Enjoy the day and grab to-morrow!”

Nick Proskurin – “All the best for this special day. Remember the good times and the life-long friends we have made and with whom we keep in contact.

Till we all meet again. Cheers, Nick Proskurin.”

Iain Kennedy – “Paul,

As I’m sure you’ve heard we in Victoria are in stage 4 lock down. Can only go to supermarket once a day, as long as is not more than 5Kms from the house. Exercise once a day for 1 hour, again no more than 5Kms from the house. Apart from that work from home and stay at home. Lucky for me, I already work from home and have done for the last 15- 20 years.

Only thing I miss visiting the customers for a coffee and a catch up. Despite Covid-19 this 2019-20 year had better sales than the previous, strange, isn’t it?

Couldn’t even go up to Ballarat in July, for Christmas in July with John & Pam Dellaca, love doing that it’s so wintery up there, with an open fire a Christmas type meal and good company it’s one of life’s great enjoyments.

With all the time at home saving a fortune in petrol, one car hasn’t moved for nearly two months and the other has gone from a tank every three or four days, to once a month.

After advice from Ian Amos & Gordon Malcom, contacted Ray Shaw at Cronulla RSL. He is helping me with my application for improved Service pension. He knows his stuff!

Yesterday was Vietnam Veterans Day, but no way to celebrate down here except to wear my 50th Coral Anniversary cap. Janet and I walk or cycle every day. Walk if the weather is good, ride on the trainer if it’s not.

At right - Us masked up to go for our walk the other day.

Close of no so I can get it in the post. Ha ha! Cheers, Iain K.”



. 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.





The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE – VETERANS DELIVER NEW AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL CARPARK

FORMER Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel employed by **Veterans in Construction** have been part of the team delivering the new car parking facilities at the Australian War Memorial, which includes extended permanent underground car parking facilities as well as additional parking close to the Memorial for visitors with mobility concerns. Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said **five veterans from Veterans in Construction worked with Lendlease ACT to deliver this project on time and on budget.**

"Service in the ADF is overwhelmingly positive — it's good for the individual, good for the community and is in the national interest, and it sets up our personnel with skills and experience that are highly valued in the civilian workforce," Mr Chester said.

"It's great to see organisations such as Lendlease working with veterans and capitalising on their valuable skills and experience to work on projects such as this, particularly at the Australian War Memorial.

"Veterans in Construction continues to excel, having won the 2019 Veteran Employer of the Year – Small award at the Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards."

Lendlease General Manager ACT Ben Owen said Lendlease is an active supporter of programs that provide opportunities for people who experience barriers to employment, including veterans seeking a return to civilian life.

"This partnership on the delivery of the Australian War Memorial car park has enabled us to leverage veterans' valuable technical skills and experience, while helping upskill the team through additional training and onsite experience," Mr Owen said.

The partnership between Lendlease and Veterans in Construction was forged in 2018. Its aim is to provide the opportunity to engage returned veterans seeking employment. Veterans in Construction is a veteran owned and operated company that employs retired ADF personnel in civil construction and has partnered with Lendlease on projects in the ACT and Victoria.

Tuesday, 25 August 2020

ENDS

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Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT.

Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling provides free and confidential support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Help is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit www.OpenArms.gov.au

. Insights and Recollections...

This topic/s has raised so much interest – we still continue with some very interesting discoveries with some remarkable memories being brought 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 Profile Extension

KEVIN THORNTON - GUNNER – 2781420

In 1965, the Federal Government decided that all 20 year olds would be conscripted into the Army. All birthday dates on a six-monthly basis would be placed in a ballot and if your birthday was pulled out and you passed the medical and had no valid reason not to be conscripted, then you were in the army.

I had to report to the Marrickville Army Base where papers were filled out. That night we were bused to Central Station and on a train, changing trains at Albury before we arrived at Seymour, Vic. Then we were bused to 2RTB Puckapunyal where we were kitted out. Next day I started my recruit training, which continued until I was assigned to a Unit. I decided to pick Artillery as it was in Sydney. I was sent to 131 Divisional Locating Battery which was stationed at the School of Artillery at North Head. Sometime after arriving we began our Battery training. Our Battery was transferred to Holsworthy Base. I was assigned to Alpha Radar under Sgt Simmons. We went on several exercises, one down to the State Forest near Nowra, but instead of coming back with the rest of the Battery, we stayed the weekend, and on Monday drove to HMAS Albatross where our Radar unit, plus vehicles were loaded onto a Caribou and flown to Bankstown Airport then back to Holsworthy Base.

The Australian Government in 1966, decided to send a Task Force to Vietnam, a detachment of 131, which included Alpha and Bravo Radar units. We then had to be medically fit. Our unit was sent to the Jungle Training Centre in Queensland, but because of a shortage of Radar Operators, some of us were sent to the School of Artillery to be trained. We left Australia on a Qantas Jet at midnight from Richmond Air Base, a brief stopover in Townsville before heading to Manila Airport, where we were allowed to get off the plane but not leave the Airport. After that we headed for Saigon Airport where we were put on a Caribou to Vung Tau. Our base was just out from Vung Tau airbase, where we were getting ready for our move to Nui Dat.

Because we had 3 Landrovers with special trailers, they decided to take a driver plus passenger in each vehicle on the move to Nui Dat. The rest of Alpha Radar were sent by Chinook helicopter to Nui Dat. On arrival, we made our way to our lines, where we set up the Radar, and had to dig a weapon pit before we could set up our tents. We did shifts on the Radar. We were with 103rd Gun Battery.

A hole was dug with sand bags as a roof, for us to setup a command post. It was alright until it rained. Because the Command Post was on the side of a slope, seepage caused the Command Post to fill up with water. Alpha Radar unit then built an above ground Command Post (see photo attached), it meant we had to go out and fill up a good number of sand bags. Soon after building the Command Post our Radar unit stopped working.

We moved our living area up the hill with 3 tents. I was in tent 1. After a while we cut down bamboo and made an area for us to have a few drinks (photo attached). A weapon pit was built, so we could do shifts and watch the front barbed wire fence. The shifts were 2 hours each night. During one of these shifts with Mick McDonald, it was my turn to go wake up the relief crew. The two left straight away and I was able to get into bed. Then we mortared. I do not remember anything after getting into bed, only what I have been told, that a mortar landed near where one of the two relief crew were sleeping.

We did take our Radar Set out on an exercise, Hayman Island, set it up and have a generator going.

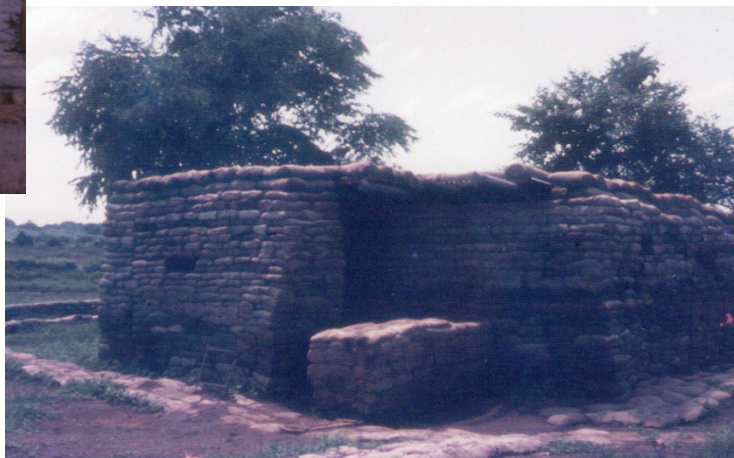
I got sick and was taken to the Australian Army Hospital at Vung Tau. As I could get up and walk around I became a working patient. I was then transferred to the American Hospital at Vung Tau because they had a Urologist. It was then decided to send me home. I left Vung Tau on Monday afternoon, flew to Butterworth in Malaysia and spent Tuesday at the RAAF hospital. On Wednesday, I was flown to Darwin, then overnight at the RAAF hospital. Thursday, I was flown into Richmond Air Base before being transferred to the Army Hospital at Ingleburn. Tests were done and after a couple of weeks, I became a week day patient. I was transferred to South Head Army Base while they decided my future. The Army/Government decided to medically discharge me from the Army, a month before my 2 years of National Service were up.

After leaving the Army, I went back to work at the Reserve Bank of Australia, got married and have 4 wonderful daughters. I took a volunteer redundancy from the Bank. Worked in security then purchased a newsagency before selling it and moving to the mid coast of NSW. One day I called into the local newsagency on the way to do a shift at the Rural Fire Service with my service ribbons on. The owner asked me what unit I was in and when I replied 131, he said he had been in 131 and asked me did I know of the association. I said no. He took my name, address and email and sent it off to the 131 association. I soon after joined the association and have taken trips with our members to Seymour/Puckapunyal and Phillip Island and to Brisbane to Enoggera.



Part of Alpha Radar unit outside one of our tents with self in the photo.

2nd Command Post built by Alpha Radar's members, filling all the sandbags.





Alpha Radar's lines with tents 1 & 2 Shown



Me outside tent 1 with bunker in front of tent.

A memory update - Jill Nieglos, an ex-Pan Am flight attendant who was doing SVN flights to and from the US plus to Australia, is a friend and an *Eyes & Ears* contributor from as far back as 2013. Well, she has forwarded on to me the following extract from the Washington Post. It's an interesting read...

Flight Status (The Washington Post), **By Sarah Rose, MAY 13, 2020**

During the Vietnam War, the women who served on special Pan Am flights flew into a war zone to transport soldiers. Why has their role been forgotten?



Pan Am flight attendants in Saigon in the 1960s. (Courtesy of panam.org)

The winter of 1968, a Boeing 707, heavy with American troops and body bags, took rounds of anti-aircraft fire immediately upon take-off from Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon.

At once, a right engine burst into flames. It was the middle of the Tet Offensive, when coordinated Viet Cong raids pounded American installations in South Vietnam. A GI sitting by the wing spotted the engine fire outside his window and caught the attention of one of the stewardesses, Gayle Larson, then 25 years old, who sped to the front to alert the cockpit crew of three. The flight engineer raced into the cabin to inspect. As Larson remembers, the planeload of GIs was unimpressed, "paying no attention to the disaster outside the cabin windows." The flight was redirected from its original destination — some holiday spot in the Pacific: maybe Hong Kong, Bangkok or Tokyo, no one remembers now

— and instead flew to Clark Air Base in the Philippines. The 707 was a first-generation long-distance jet with four engines, but it could fly on just three. In an all-economy configuration, it could carry 180 GIs.

Larson and her roommate, Susan Harris, who was also on the flight, secured the cabin for safety and fed the troops. "We were just trying to make sure everything was okay," Harris says.

Now in their 70s, Larson, of Portland, Ore., and Harris, of Kingston, Wash., both remember that surviving a sniper attack and an engine failure was a moment of comic juxtapositions: The wing was on fire, but inside the smell of freshly baked Nestlé Toll House cookies wafted through the cabin. During their years of service, it was a ritual for the roommates to mix up and freeze rolls of cookie dough at their home in Sausalito, Calif., for the trips to [Vietnam](#).

"The guys ate a lot of cookies" that day, Larson says. "They had probably seen far worse things on the ground fighting." A few nights later, while waiting for a new engine to arrive from Hong Kong, at a happy hour in the officers' club at Clark Air Base, Harris met a pilot for Braniff airlines who would become her husband.

For a small and unrecognized group of women, now mostly in their 70s, such high-drama, meet-cute moments are the personal and pedestrian memories of a war that otherwise divided a nation. These Pan Am stewardesses (now an outdated term but common at the time) were volunteers and got no special training for flying into war, though their pilots were mostly World War II or Korean War vets. Their aircraft routinely took ground fire.

The pilots, all male, received hazardous-duty pay for flights into the combat zone. The women aboard did not. For the Pan Am flight attendants, there were no parades after the war, nor much movement to celebrate their role or their place as accidental pioneers in military history.

The U.S. Air Force gave the flight attendants a rank of second lieutenants; from the point of view of the Geneva Conventions, if they were captured they could claim protections of prisoners of war. But they were civilians. They wore uniforms but not jungle fatigues: wrist-length white gloves and a baby blue "overseas cap." In addition to serving as first aid and safety officers in flight, the women had to undergo girdle and weight checks.

During the Vietnam War, Pan Am had an exclusive contract with the Department of Defense to run R&R (rest and recreation) flights for soldiers on leave throughout the Pacific. Rented to the nation for only \$1, it was effectively a military airline within the airline, starting with a fleet of six DC-6 propeller aircraft and, ultimately, 707 jets, calling daily at three air bases in the theatre of combat. "We staff it with our best and most beautiful stewardesses, and the food and service are the finest," said the Pan Am vice president in 1966 to the Associated Press. Over the course of the war, some of the women would fly as many as 200 times into the combat zone.

The Vietnam airlift crews got no medals or congressional citations for their work, though they were a necessary part of national security. There were no parades, nor much movement to celebrate their role or their place as accidental pioneers in military history. Where airlift crews for the 1991 Gulf War were celebrated with service medals from the Air Force, the pilots and flight attendants of the Vietnam War have not been similarly recognized. For more than 50 years, the stewardesses' war stories have mostly not been told. They are important battlefield stories, war narratives that just happen to belong to women.



An illustration from Pan Am's 1966 annual report. (University of Miami/Courtesy of panam.org)

The R&R flights were a key part of boosting troop morale for a rapidly unpopular war. The program aimed "to remove the individual from his normal duty environment in order to provide a respite from the rigors of a combat tour in Vietnam," according to a directive from the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Trips initially went to short-haul destinations in Asia such as Taipei or Bangkok.

The Pan Am stewardesses served a military role during the [Vietnam War](#) some 30 years before the U.S. armed forces would revoke the combat exclusion policy for women. Of the 2.7 million American troops who saw active duty in the Vietnam War, 91 percent travelled to the war zone on one of 23 U.S. commercial air carriers, **which hauled one-fourth of military cargo overseas.**

"It seems unreal," Patricia Ireland says of the notion that these flight attendants performed a key role in America's war footing. Ireland, past president of the National Organization for Women, is perhaps the best-known former Pan Am flight attendant of the '60s; seven years working for the airline helped inspire her feminist activism, which included campaigning for the Equal Rights Amendment. "That just changes the nature of their job."

The R&R flights were only one part of the total Vietnam airlift. For every conflict since World War II, America has moved its troops and cargo across the seas via airplane. By policy, our military does not maintain enough aircraft to perform that job, as buying and servicing a large fleet of transport planes is expensive in peacetime. Instead, American forces rely on a partnership between the Pentagon and commercial airlines so that in times of national emergency there is a set organization and command structure in place. By 1967, some 800 flight attendants were working in the combat zone, transporting around 2.5 million military passengers. For many young soldiers, the female crew members would be the last American women they would ever see.



Pan Am flight attendant Isabel Dustman with Robert Gear. (panam.org)

"We are war buddies," Helene Harper Shapiro of Potomac, Md., says of the friendship bonds with former colleagues that span half a century. It was a time in their lives marked by hard work but also by adventure. They signed on for around-the-world trips and exotic layovers with the United States' first global airline; Pan Am had only international routes, no domestic flights. "We were kind of the first women who were globalized, who lived a globalized existence long before anybody else did," says Helen Davey, who now lives in Los Angeles. It was easy to make friends at work, the former flight

attendants remember, because everyone was about the same age, everyone had outgoing personalities, everyone had been to college at least two years and spoke a foreign language. They were predominantly white, though the Pacific routes employed Asian women, about 11 percent of the total stewardess corps. The uniform was a great equalizer. "We were clones of each other," says Marjorie Perry of Tucson.

Flight attendants were among the largest group of American civilians in the combat theatre. A typical soldier's tour was only 12 months in country; the infamous "one and done" policy hampered America's ability to contest the war, but it was designed to quell anti-draft sentiment. These women, therefore, had an unmatched longitudinal vision of America's years in Vietnam.

Some volunteered to staff the airlift through the duration of the conflict, from the troop buildup under President Lyndon B. Johnson to the very last flights out of a surrendering Saigon in April 1975. No other women — and few men — can say they saw as much of the Vietnam War for as long.



Pan Am flight attendant Marjorie Perry. (Courtesy of Marjorie Perry)

Former stewardesses repeat the refrain:

Despite the horrors of war, flights out of Vietnam were joyous, the happiest places in the Pacific; GIs often broke into applause on take-off. Likewise, returning flights were sombre. "You could hear a pin drop, not a word, not a peep out of them," recalls Jacqui Nolte of Granite Bay, Calif., among the women who flew through the Tet Offensive. "They knew where they were going."

While the women were all young, most just out of college, they remember the troops were even younger. Many were teenagers who read comic books throughout the flight.

Flight attendants shepherding GIs overseas were trained to be first responders and safety officers in the sky, but they offered themselves up as therapists, big sisters and pen pals, too. It was an age before in-flight movies, and the women were extroverts and aimed to have fun with the troops, bringing more than just cookies aboard, but also Easter eggs, party hats, wigs and costumes for in-flight dress-up contests. They acted as unofficial tour guides for the exotic destinations ahead, recommending the right places to buy pearls, silks or perfume for some girlfriend or sister back home. Because of the duration of the flights, the women had time to get to know the troops. Some say they tried to keep up the friendships afterward, occasionally to sobering effect. "I started writing to different soldiers, being a pen pal to several of them, but they all got killed, and I felt like a jinx," remembers Helen Davey, who flew with Pan Am for 20 years.

Stewardesses could be as bawdy as they were compassionate: Some cabin crews taped suggestive magazine ads to the tray tables, so when the trays were brought down for meal service, soldiers were greeted with images of scantily clad models in bikinis. On one flight, the purser announced a surprise: "Dessert is going to be served topless," recalls John Marshall, a former Pan Am flight engineer, now an aviation safety inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration in St. Louis. The cabin of GIs erupted in cheers and whistles. As the dessert cart rolled down the aisle, the flight engineer — a man — walked behind it with his shirt off, delivering ice cream to the troops.

The meal service for military charters was first class, though cabins were configured in all economy seats: The troops got thick steaks prepared to order, ice cream and fresh milk. There was no alcohol service, but flight attendants would sometimes reach into the cocktail kit, pour milk into a martini glass, insert a swizzle stick, and add a few drops of maraschino cherry juice and a cherry to simulate a tropical drink. "We treated them like kings," says Jacqui Nolte, who flew with Pan Am for six years. "It was really an honour to be able to do that for them."



Military personnel near a Pan Am B-727 in Saigon. (panam.org)

Even airplane landings were intense. Instead of a low and gentle approach, as at a modern airport, the aircraft came in high to the very approach-end of the airstrip. At the last possible moment, the captain would point the plane's nose at the ground and dive "practically straight down" to avoid anti-aircraft fire, says Marshall. "It took a lot of skill to flare [a DC-6] at the last minute and get the airplane in a position to land on that runway."

The former stewardesses still remember the blast of heat upon opening the aircraft door in Vietnam. They would change from flat-heeled cabin shoes — so as not to puncture an inflatable slide in an emergency — to mandatory stilettos. Their baby-blue wool skirts and blazers were alleged to be all-weather material,

even in the tropics, but the regulation nylon stockings were intolerably hot for a jungle.

The ground operation was quick. Aircraft were allowed no more than two hours to turn around and unload a full plane of GIs, refuel and reload. After landing, engineers checked the fuselage for bullet holes. In an era of hijackings, crews would get held hostage by both Vietnamese dissidents and American soldiers. For security, cabin crews were often ordered to not leave the airplane once it was on the ground.

A white passenger airplane with a big blue ball on its tail was a standing target, visible above the tree line. The airfield at Danang was littered on either side with downed military aircraft and blown-up trucks.

"We dropped the guys off, and there were machine guns at the end of the ramp, and they were shooting at us at the end of the runway," says Nolte. As a new flight, full of GIs would race up the stairs, men sometimes handed off pieces of fresh shrapnel to the women for souvenirs.

Men who had families frequently chose to take leave in Honolulu if they could, meeting up with wives and small children. Those flights and the airport reunions stand out for the stewardesses. "I remember one little boy grasping the leg of his

father, saying, 'Don't go! Don't go!' That really broke my heart," says Donna Igoe of Sherman Oaks, Calif. "That's what they were facing, and they were enormously courageous."

For Thieu-Tra Duong Iwafuchi, Pan Am's first Vietnamese stewardess, who lives in San Francisco, the route was painful and personal. She was born in North Vietnam and fled to the south after French colonists killed her father. To visit her mother and sisters, who remained in Saigon, Duong Iwafuchi would bid for flight patterns that took her home. "I'm from a big family, and I got to see my family every month at least one or two times."

When the city fell in April 1975, Duong Iwafuchi evacuated Saigon on the very last commercial flight out, a "mercy flight" carrying the Vietnamese families of Pan Am personnel as well as Vietnamese orphans. Her five sisters escaped on that flight by wearing surplus Pan Am uniforms.



A Pan Am B-707 in Saigon. (panam.org)

As jets came to dominate the R&R service, troops could take leave as far away as Australia and Hawaii. The destination list expanded alongside American commitment in Southeast Asia, with evermore cities absorbing the tens of thousands of GIs streaming into the region. At its peak in 1969, the R&R program flew to Bangkok, Hawaii, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Taipei, Tokyo and Sydney. Trips got dangled as an incentive for reenlistment: Soldiers who extended their tours could be eligible for a second leave after only three months. By the latter half of 1970, about 17,000 soldiers would take R&R every

month.

Many of the women used layovers in Asia to visit wounded soldiers at military hospitals in Vietnam, Guam, Manila and Tokyo. "The kindness between some of these men was unbelievable," Ann Moon, in Santa Fe, N.M., remembers of her hospital visits. Moon flew with Pan Am for 24 years. "I'll never forget this man with a head wound helping a man without legs, amputated at the thighbone. And the man with no legs helping the man with [the head wound], without his faculties." "One [amputee] asked me, 'Is my wife going to accept me this way?' recalls Marjorie Perry. "Of course, she will," I said. "Now I wonder, did he even live?"

Former stewardesses say AWOL attempts grew more frequent, and the number of drugs found in the aircraft cabins increased. Smoking was still allowed on airplanes then, and flights were thick with marijuana smoke.

Over the base loudspeakers, President Johnson announced a halt to naval and air attacks in Vietnam. The GIs looked up from the tarmac as the president spoke. Stewardesses stood still.

"I had 19 heroin addicts I was bringing out of Vietnam, and they were going through withdrawal on the plane, and it was terrifying to watch," says Nancy Hult Ganis, a former flight attendant of eight years who lives in San Francisco and produced the short-lived television series "Pan Am" for ABC. "I felt really angry because I thought these were young kids put in a situation where they couldn't cope, and [drug use] was their method, and we have no means to handle this. I was mad at the whole situation, at realizing the insanity of war."

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.

. 132 Battery RAA Update – Sent in by Grahame Dignam...

Shadow UAS deployed on first domestic operation

06/08/2020 [Brian Hartigan](#)



CAPTION: Craftsman Matt Williams, left, and Corporal Jonathon Healy service a Shadow air vehicle at Bamaga, Far North Queensland, during Operation Resolute.
Story by Sergeant Sebastian Beurich.

For the first time 20th Regiment Royal Australian Artillery deployed its Shadow tactical unmanned aerial system (UAS) on a domestic operation to provide maritime surveillance for Joint Task Force 639 on Operation Resolute.

Deployed to Bamaga in far-north Queensland since early June, the 50-strong task unit, raised from 132 Battery, is supporting Maritime Border Command until later in the year.

Detachment commander Major Dan Evangelisti said the task-unit battery was employed in support of a whole-of-government, maritime-led, joint task force.

"This task has provided us with plenty of challenges," Major Evangelisti said.

"This is the first time we've been employed in this role and the team have taken to it quickly."

The team comprises Army and RAAF personnel including imagery analysts, cooks, signallers, maintenance staff as well as UAS operators.

A mobile air operations team also provides air traffic control for the Shadow's airspace.

Major Evangelisti said Border Command were happy to have them.

"We've achieved some good surveillance outcomes, but we've also achieved some good community outcomes," Major Evangelisti said.

"By showing the people of the Torres Strait that our capability is out here, we're showing them how we contribute to protecting them from criminal elements and the prospect of COVID-19 vectors from overseas.

"Other government agencies and law enforcement personnel also support of our presence here because it's something new and interesting, but it's also the future.

"They're looking at the Shadow system and our operations, saying 'we want that in support of us', which is exciting."

Battery Sergeant Major Warrant Officer Class 2 Geoffrey Bruhn said task-unit personnel were extremely humbled to be deploying on a domestic operation, many for the first time in their careers.

Along with other Army elements from the Regional Force Surveillance Units, they're supporting personnel from the Queensland Police, Australian Border Force, Australian Federal Police and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

Grahame Dignam unearthed the following and I had a brain explosion to see the name “**Jeff Basford**”, only to recover to reality on receiving an email from Jeff – read on...

REMEMBER WHEN We flew troops to Vietnam

IN the late 1960s and early '70s I was rostered to crew seven RAAF military charter flights, carrying Australian soldiers into and out of Vietnam. During the war, Qantas Boeing 707 aircraft and crews were used, as the RAAF did not have the aircraft, that could handle the workload.

The Australian government, directed Qantas to call for volunteers. Quite a few of us felt the war was justified, and the government easily filled its crew quota. Because we felt we were helping the war effort,

we didn't negotiate any extra benefits. Qantas insured all cabin crew the extra amount of \$80,000, which would have purchased four houses. So we felt our families had security if something had happened.

The military charter flights, usually took off and arrived in darkness, at Richmond RAAF base, and Mascot airport, in complete secrecy. Years later, when the war went bad, I realised this secrecy was on purpose. There were no crowds, no parades, no family to see them off. Hundreds of

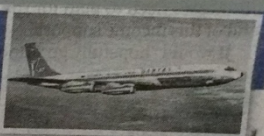
flights carried 140 soldiers on each charter. The flights left Sydney and flew via Darwin to either Singapore or Manila, then a waiting crew operated the final leg into Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport, Vietnam, and waited until homeward bound troops were aboard.

On the last leg, Manila into Vietnam, the young soldiers became so quiet you could almost hear a pin drop. I knew they were hiding thoughts and feelings, to get themselves into a strong mental state.

After going through this a

few times, I started to feel so sorry and angry that our Government was doing this to such young kids. The flights leaving Vietnam were the complete opposite – troops were raucous and drank the bars dry.

Tan Son Nhut Airport was the busiest airport in the world. American traffic controllers welcomed us as the Red Rats or Flying Rats, because they thought the kangaroo on the tail looked more like a rat. As we entered Vietnam's airspace, they scrambled jet fighters to



A Qantas Boeing 707, circa 1970.

escort us. When we lined up with the runway the pilot put the aircraft into a steep dive. As we taxied along the runway, there were helicopters, bombers, jet fighters. It was always a relief to take off and reach a higher altitude.

JEFF BASFORD
Email history@dailytelegraph.com.au or write to the History Editor, The Daily Telegraph, 2 Holt St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Ed sent out the following to the group –

“I haven't been able to contact Jeff for quite some time, but I've recently received, from Grahame Dignam, a newspaper article written by Jeff with regards to QANTAS flying troops to and from Vietnam.

So, I'm seeking help from someone who may be in contact with him to see if he would contact me, please? Paul”

Thanks for the heaps of responses – Grahame Smith sent me the correct email address

Ed sent the following to

“Morning Jeff,

Hope this finds you well?

I have attached a copy of an article (sent to me via Grahame Dignam) which I gather you wrote with regards to QANTAS and Vietnam flights in the '60s-'70s?

Over time I have included a few articles sent in to me from an ex-PAN AM flight attendant, in fact I have another one which should be put into E&Es over the next month or two.

Anyway, recently I have tried to find a contact at QF to see if there is a club/group or whatever of ex-QF flight people who may have that era stuff archived - I'd love to publish it - but had no luck.

Do you know of any such group or should I just try and contact the Daily Telegraph at the details given on the clipping?

Look forward to hearing from you? Paul.”

Ed – I received the following from Jeff – “Sorry Paul, this is not an article written by me. I have never worked for an airline.

Hope you find the right one. My name is Jeff **Bassford**.”

Ed – It would have been handy to have a look at the spelling of Jeff's surname!

Anyway, I've been in touch with “history@dailytelegraph.com.au and maybe I might get more of a QANTAS history/recollections during their SVN times. - let's keep our fingers crossed.

27.08.20 – Bingo! Keep in contact and reading Eyes & Ears as we've managed to contact Jeff Basford the author of this newspaper article and we'll be publishing more.



Looking to connect with the family of –

Lesley Phillip CONNELL, 6709098 Gunner – he served in Radar with the Detachment in SVN in 24.09.1969 -13.08.1970 and passed away in 2011.

He was originally from Devonport, Tasmania

Grahame Dignam received the following email which has led to this enquiry -

“My name is **Nicholas Montgomery** and I am writing this email from **Missouri, USA**. I am reaching out to you in hopes 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 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 back. 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_PJjNYhsicReghRehTTqrtlYHkae631p4

Sincerely;

Nicholas Montgomery”

...then -

Grahame also managed to dig up the following Locators who served in Radar during the 1969-70 era.

A few guys that were in the radar group 69/70 with Les were - Peter Meaney, Graham Williams, Paul Butcher and Stan Patterson, plus here some more Richard Chaplin, 70 (H'shoe), Chris Chapple, 70 (H'shoe), David Dougherty, 70/71, Wayne Jeffrey, 70/71, John Lucas, 70/71, David Negus, 70, David Reilley, 70 A (H'shoe) and Greg Tommasi, 70/71.

If anyone can help, then could you please contact;

Grahame Dignam - sectreas131locators@gmail.com



Looking for some help to Locate a Late Locator -

Kevin Browning – sent the following request, plus there is a following email from **Brendon**

Dent, son of **Edwin Leslie Lewis**...

“Hi Paul,

This message came to the RAA Historical Company. As he was a Det 131 member could you ask the group if they can assist.

Regards, Kevin”

...then **Brendon's original email** –

Hi just trying to find out information about my father I know he's service number Was 53909 and he was a sergeant. My contact number 0447964818. Brendon Dent.”

Brendon's dad's details as available to us –

Lewis, Edwin Leslie S/Sgt 53909 SVN 1970-71 Dob 08.08.35 DoD 26.08.92



Albert “Bert” Jacka – “I'm sorry that I don't reply to your emails, I forget, it is not intentionally, just a result of the medical situation I suffered. I continue to improve in some areas, but then decline in others, a complicated and unfortunate situation but there is nothing I can do about it. I did visit a Specialist on Wednesday and he has referred me to multiple other medical experts for the required scans, scopes, probes along with whatever else they do to determine how best to continue my treatment. I think the probable determination of the Specialist will be to change (reduce, I hope) my medication, currently 17 pills per day but it does keep me going, can't complain.

The current pandemic, has prevented me from unloading property but, that is life, it is not a complaint, just how life is currently. I did get my licence back and am driving again, not that you can go anywhere, ok, the local shops and it is handy and enjoyable, just to get out can be a break.

Our Qld borders did close last night, not sure if that is good or bad, sure I agree, keep Melbourne (Victoria) out but everyone else seems to be doing their best while keeping tight control and responding rapidly and effectively to any infection. We have a State election coming up, our Labour leader fears for her future (and so she should) and thinks that by keeping everyone else out we will be saved. Our state is the most heavily debt laden within our country, our government is only concerned with self-reward as opposed to State development, I plead for her departure but am only a single vote within our community. Because of our restrictions over the past 6 months I really do not know the true community feel for future government, I say piss em off, but that's just me.

One recent old friend (from Nam) that I sent a Xmas card to, Steve Voss, did reply, I have not seen him for probably 40 years, his address was in my contact list but there had been no contact for a long time. He is well, has a daughter and a granddaughter and lives in North Queensland. I might venture up there when this drama is over. I think he has been retired on TPI for 20 years or so. I write to him and while he did ring me, I am quite hopeless at that form of

communication (phone) problem is, I just can't remember conversations and the next day haven't got a clue, just part of the punishment I got from my brain seizure, it was back in October 2018, I spent 10 weeks in Hospital, unconscious for 6 weeks, broken leg / hip from kicking a Nurse, also I did break her arm, that is a guess, I really don't know. That was the cause of my 12-month licence suspension along with the many, many medical appointments for the following six months. While the medical intentions and procedures were excellent, I lost the desire and commitment to continue, I'm sure that I failed, I just could not work out what the assignment was.

So, there you have a slight update as to my condition, situation, lifestyle etc there are many more intimate and public revolutions regarding my 70 years. I am not going to bore you with details nor try to reinvent the past but it has been enjoyable, rewarding and entertaining. Two kids Leonie & Scott, four grandkids, Luke, Noah, Sienna & Coen all a really good bunch that reward constantly, mind you, we are generous, loving, appreciative and rewarded.

I really have no more boring information to provide, I am recovering from my really low base level Brain seizure, but it is slow, difficult, complicated, when you feel recovered, you just fall back again and have to start all over again. I am not complaining, just informing. You are welcome to include me on your membership list, but that is all the information I wish provided. I still hope/wish/desire better recovery prior to further reintroduction. Thank you.

Enjoy your evening, Seeya, Bert."

Phil Mulgrew – Sent in the following which was in addition to his Locator Profile update (new location and photo).

On anything else of interest...

The photos are in sequence to description –

Does anyone remember this dog at 31Bravo at the Horseshoe? From what I was told by Tiny Little at the time, her name was Slut and she was a permanent resident of the Horseshoe. Medics from every Infantry Company or Battery that did their turn there gave her vaccination shots and fed her well, so she would have been the healthiest dog in SVN apart from the tracker dogs. She was so used to Aussies and Kiwis that South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians could not approach her without fear of being bitten.

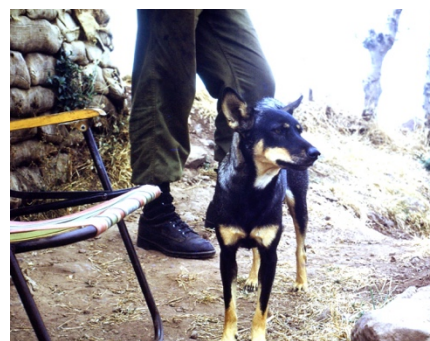


Photo of Bombardier Harold 'Tiny Little' taken by me at around Christmas time in 1968 at 31B. Tiny is standing on the roof of the living quarters of the LP looking south over the Horseshoe crater.



Photo of singer Yvonne Barrett performing at the Nui Dat Bowl at the only concert I was able to attend. Sadly, she was murdered by her Vietnamese partner in Australia years later.

Other performers were Johnny Chester, (without the Chessmen). He, along with Yvonne and another female performer, Pat Carroll, were backed by the band Jigsaw. Jack Perry (one half of Zig and Zag) told the jokes and ran the commentary along with Johnny Chester.

They provided a welcome respite from our activities and were first class acts. I was pretty close to the stage and enjoyed the concert immensely.

Take care Phil."

Got any clues/answers to Phil's queries – send them in.

Trev Prideaux – The following was extracted from a recent email from Trev - "Hi Paul Downloaded the photo of Warwick and it is now on the wall off my den. Look forward to hearing from you, regards, Trev."

Here's part of my response... "Trev, Great to hear from you..."

Warwick's photo - yes, he meant a lot to a heap of blokes and I guess possibly more so to us Nashos as he was not an atypical army officer - he got us all involved, and put up with us!

Hope this finds you well? Paul"



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...

A spot of rain in downtown San Miguel de Allende last Sunday (1st Aug) got the passenger slightly wet – I don't think the driver got a tip! There was a great video of it on Facebook I could cut and paste.

This was the photo I attached to my quarterly mailout.



Peter Dealy – “Hello Paul

Thanks for latest *E&E*. Great read as usual.

Nothing much happening here as we keep our head down and stick to the rules. It's a pity that some can't and as a result the rest of us pay, some with the loss of their lives which is tragic.

We are keeping good health and are keeping tab on the health of the Vets that we have contact with. We can't have meetings, so the email and ph are getting well used.

Personally, have spent a fair bit of time in the garden. Can now tell the difference between a Callistemon and a Banksia. Actually, the gardens in Numurkah are looking the best they have ever done as many utilise their time doing the jobs that have needed doing, but never got around to it.

My wife Ann and I can go to the Bowls Club (following the Covid rules) and roll a few up and down for our own Mental and physical health. She is a better bowler than me.

Also through DVA I am doing an Exercise program that started on line, then were able to go to the GYM, but now with new regs, am back on line.

Re Covid - As you will have read, Victoria now gone into “disaster” stage, particularly in Melbourne area.

Consequently, Vietnam Veterans Day Commemorations on the 18th August have virtually been cancelled here in Victoria.

Our Goulburn Valley Branch will simply be holding a Last Post / Reveille/ Wreath laying to remember the 521 who lost their lives while doing what they were told to do by the Government of the day.

We are encouraging Vets and their families to pause at 11am on the day to remember and reflect.

Lest we Forget.

Keep well Dicko

All the best to you and yours.

Peter Dealy OAM, President, GVVVA”

Philip Mulgrew – “Hi Paul.

It's overcast here in Narangba with sporadic rain throughout the day and will continue into the night. But the rain is very welcome. It's on a broad front sweeping from the west.

Wilpena Pound in the Flinders ranges even had snow from this weather.

Queensland has to be the Lucky State in reference to the Lucky Country with the Corona Virus. Anna Palaszczuk, the Queensland premier is slamming the border shut with NSW tomorrow morning at 1 am, 9th August. It's already closed to Victoria, but open to SA and WA. The premier was known to have an itchy trigger finger hovering over the button to close the border anytime, but was deferring because of the effect on tourism here from NSW visitors.

But Queenslanders can still move around three quarters of the Australian continent which is great for us. No masks at all except for some retail outfits and individuals who choose to wear them. We have some restrictions naturally but nothing like the southern states.

Your photo of the taxi acting like a boat reminded me of some of the cars caught in flooding on Brisbane's southside in the past. Those floods did seriously compromise big 4wd's and trucks.

We are fine and well here, not a bad day here anytime, except for torrential rain, floods and house wrecking storms on rare occasions, but that can be anyway in Australia.
Keep yourself and the family safe in these worrying times. Phil.”

Gordon Malcolm – “All good here, most are being sensible, I have a good size block and plenty to do on it, bird life enjoyable, a couple of photos to remind you of Oz.

Back at gym 3 times a week and dancing twice a week, interesting dancing with a face mask, but it works.



Stay safe. G”

Russell Jackson – “Hello Paul,

Thank you for the mail. Your continued contact is appreciated.

I envy your afternoon temperature as we are in the midst of a cold snap where daily maximums have been in the low teens with low single digits overnight.

It has been a dry July for us and a couple of days of rain have been most welcome this week.

Lawn mowing earlier this week was raising some dust which is very unusual for a Victorian winter.

We could have done with the sort of downpour that you mention rather than the light sprinkle that we actually got.

Lock down is with us again although we have not got the same severe restrictions as Melbourne.

Mask wearing is mandatory and the home sewing machine has been busy stitching up some triple layer home-made versions.

Shopping for us is now almost fully on line with contactless home delivery.

Margot has had a couple of shots at honing her hair cutting skills on me and I am back down to a reasonable hair length after it being long enough to scare the crap out of me every morning.

Still managing to fill in time in and around the house and with all the practice I have been getting I must be close to being a world champion at Sudoku.

A planned trip to France and Croatia for later this year has obviously been cancelled and refunds from the travel companies involved are now under negotiation.

We have appreciated the extra money in our bank accounts courtesy of the two lots of stimulus payments and despite our self-isolation we have used some of this money for on-line purchases.

Keep up the good work and stay safe. Regards Russ.”

Terry Bruce – “Paul,

Thanks for your latest e-mail, although once again I find myself apologising for my tardiness in not replying to your last two e-mails sooner.

Even though retired I manage to keep myself busy in a variety of ways (including visits to my GP and various specialist doctors), although sitting in the sun is good, too!

That said, I have been occupied with various projects, including assisting with the training of several new members of our Bush (Rural) Fire Brigade (all of whom have now passed their basic fire fighter assessment to become probationary fire fighters). There is always plenty to do on the property, including pile burning, fence repairs, windmill repairs and a multitude of other maintenance jobs requiring attention including working on my Jeep collection and railway carriage. I've also been assisting my sons on their respective properties in fencing work and general building work. I've done some improvements inside my 'collectables' shed too, including installing a bar fridge and CD player (both suitably disguised to ensure that they fit in with the 'heritage' look of the place). I have a pot belly stove that requires installation in the shed as well so, even though I hesitate to use the term, it's becoming a 'man cave' (bar fridge, music, heater and so forth). I'll send some photo's when it is further advanced.

Craig's new house construction in The Oaks village (about five kilometres away) is proceeding at a fast pace with an expected completion date of September. After completion and he and his family move in to it Judith and I will move back in to the 'big house' and the house in which we are currently living (an engineering marvel) will be sold, folded down to caravan size, towed away and re-established elsewhere.

We've managed to self-isolate from the Corona virus as best as possible by virtue of where we live, only going out for shopping, etc. and, as mentioned above, to attend various medical appointments. Mind you, there's plenty to keep us

busy here what with looking after the property and entertaining our six grandchildren, all of whom live either on the property or in close proximity.

Things have certainly turned around here from the bush fire situation that I last wrote to you about. Because of the recent and frequent rain storms that we've experienced, our three dams and the house tanks are full and there's plenty of grass for the livestock. I may have to start the old tractor and do some slashing soon. However, it won't be too long before bushfire season is upon us once again so anything done to mitigate the chances of bush fire impact on or about the property, is important.

Again, keep up the great work you are doing on the production of the *Eyes and Ears*. I, like all the other recipients I'm sure, look forward to receiving the monthly edition.

Keep safe. All the best to you and Helen.

Kind regards, Terry Bruce."

John l'Anson – "G'day Paul I am still here in Thailand and am actually stuck here now. Due to the virus, it is difficult to return, because on return you must isolate for 14 days and you are stuck in the city where you arrive because the state borders are closed. I have an apartment in Port Douglas where I intend to stay but I would be forced to remain in NSW if I arrive in Sydney with no idea for how long! So i will just have to wait for improvement. Thailand has changed and the Thais blame us expats for the virus problem so I think it is time to go home which many expats have done already which means many businesses are really doing it tough but at least the weather is still warm and pleasant. That's all my news mate. John."

Russel Hamsey – "Paul:

Good to hear from you mate and to know you remain safe. Believe it or not we are currently watching an ice hockey game in Canada. The wonders of internet.

All is well here and life remains busy and interesting.

The Regt is doing well with 131 Bty training in Wide Bay at the moment and 132 Bty still up North in Bamaga, operating in support of OP Resolute. CSS Bty continues to support the Regt in their usual fine fashion.

The project to replace the Shadow TUAS has progressed to the tender evaluation stage. As well, next week, the Regt will test an initial prototype of the future Ground Control Station based on the Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle. If this works the way we expect, it will fundamentally change the Regt by adding significant combat mobility and tactical agility. The regimental precinct in Gallipoli Barracks has also been spruced up. The new signage leaves anyone passing through the area in no doubt which unit occupies the ground.

By now, I expect you have heard that the LSTAA executive has decided to cancel the reunion planned for Oct. The COVID situation is just not settled enough to hold such an event. So, we'll give it another try in Apr 21, to take advantage of the ANZAC Day weekend.

Certainly, interesting times.

Well, that's about it. Stay safe my friend, Russ Hamsey."

Darryl Musgrove – "Hello Paul, pleased to finally make contact again. I've been without email access for about ten weeks, but have finally had the bug removed

which kept changing my password as I tried to login. Catching up on about 800 unread emails that arrived when I could not open them.

Stay safe. Regards Darryl."

Tony Goldsmith – "Paul,

It's a bright Sunday arvo (1.30 pm) where I am at about 20c and windy (so I am complaining). Sorry that I'm about 1 hour late (put it down to daylight saving). No, we don't have daylight saving.

Before breakfast we did our Sunday paper shopping (can't remember what time - don't remember much of anything these days) no mask – no gloves – no temperature taken- went by myself to the paper stand outside Brumby's and at a distance placed my credit card on the gizmo. Very nerve wracking experience. They even had chalk spots marked on the footpath for social distancing. I hope that I'm still sane by the time we get a vaccine and life returns to normal.

Our in-house thing to do is to use the dining room table as a ping pong table and play (??) table tennis. Actually, works ok, except Chris usually beats me. (may have mentioned this previously – blame memory problem)

Obviously, I'm scratching to find any news of any substance, but as usual – good to hear from you.

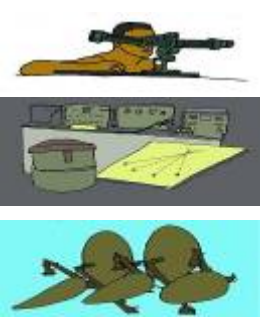
Hi to Helen. Keep well and happy to you both. Tony.'

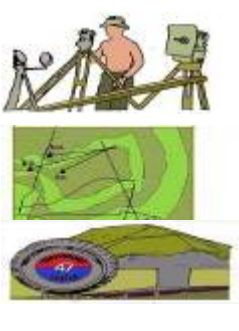
Notice Board – Hey, see what's coming up?

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

Got anything you want to tell us about?



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>

“Hello fellow Locators,
 I appreciate that we have been distracted recently and may have missed the 1 July reminder with all the social distancing, masking up, infection rates etc however, I have noticed that half of the exec committee (Sec/Treas included), Regional Reps and some significant others are currently not financial. Coming up to the AGM this is not an ideal position to find ourselves in so I recommend your attention to this detail.
 If you feel that you have paid please call me 0437 361 602 or email the Sec Treas for confirmation.
 Grahame Dignam, Secretary / Treasurer
 131 Locators Assn Inc ABN 92 663 816 973 Email sectreas131locators@gmail.com to check.
 Grahame"

Presidential perambulations

Many aspects of the corona virus are causing considerable angst within the community. The current stringent controls upon citizens of Melbourne and Victoria, but also some in other states would seem to be ideal to test out the context of this nation’s social construct of Stockholm syndrome.
 This syndrome occurs when hostages or abuse victims bond with their captors or abusers. For our generation, Patty Hearst in the US during 1974 would be the classic case. For younger generations, the current lockdown conditions may be their cause celebre for the syndrome. Do the state border closures and other legislated controls enable the syndrome to be evaluated in the future?
 And how might reactions to Stockholm syndrome be measured about the virus crisis controls introduced? My thought is that elections in Australia could well indicate whether this syndrome was active here. The first test was the Northern Territory elections, which saw the incumbent party returned to government, albeit with a significantly reduced majority. Queensland’s political stance seems to centre upon keeping the natives relatively happy pending the end of October 2020 election. Will the Queensland border closures and associated impacts upon the business sectors, especially tourism, mean the voters will throw out the current government because of their Covid controls upon individual freedoms? The Victorian government, which has introduced the most draconian of controls, including a nightly curfew for at least 6 weeks, will not be tested at the polls until late 2022. Provided the Covid restrictions have been lifted by then will Victorians still remember the hostage circumstances and cuddle up to their corona captors at the election. Only time will tell. Meanwhile, travel from Australia to Stockholm is probably out of the question for maybe the next two years.
 Stay well and remember that 1.5m distancing. Allen



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/131divlocbtyraa>

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: **Tuesday, 8th September, 2020 at 1100hrs**
 Venue: **ZOOM** **You’re all welcome**

. **Pertinent Points** – extracted from the 131 Locators Association
ZOOM Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 11th August, 2020 at
 1105hrs...

Attendees were: Bob Billiards, Paul Dickson, Terry Erbs,
 Ron Mason, Merv Nairn, Grahame Dignam,
 Bert Blink, Gordon Malcolm, Reiny Nieuwenhof,
 Allen Morley, Ernie Newbold and Ian Amos.



Chairman President Allen Morley opened the meeting and thanked those who had logged in from far away.

Financial Membership is currently ...**127**, plus Associates **2**, Affiliates **12** Total **141**. Lapsed **31** members

Presidents report.

Allen advised that:

- . The AGM would go ahead on the 10 November 2020 at a site to be confirmed but probably Kokoda Track memorial walkway which has the appropriate facilities.
- . Reminded us that VV Day on 18th August would be a day that we would need to gather in spirit just like Anzac Day.
- . There has been a decision to posthumously award a Victoria Cross to 18-Year-old Able Seaman Teddy Sheean for his actions during a Japanese air attack in 1942 which cost him his life.
- . Allen having read the minutes of the meeting between April and July has virtually confirmed their correctness

. web Performance...

Bob produced web stats prior to the meeting and advised that activity appearing to lower. He also supplied an invoice covering the past 6 months of ISP costs totalling \$178.835 was presented to the meeting which passed the motion for reimbursement unanimously

Mention was made of our Face book page which now numbers 161 members and is becoming more active.

. Health.

Covid19 is still rampant in our society despite the deniers, the complacent and those who were born "IMMUNE" to it. Continue to be cautious, diligent, and mask up if you are in traffic.

General Business.

Discussions ensued on the following:

- . Allen commented the files shared by Keith Ayliffe in drop box proved to be low res and therefore generally not suited for the Photo Album project. Terry Erbs also noted that the files were also shared to 131 Bty/20Regt RAA as well for their storage.
- . Also, Keith has recently suffered a broken hip and is now recuperating (badly/ crankily). Terry also enquired if there were any new Tracks of the Dragon copies available. There are none for sale or distribution but 1 copy is being held for a special occasion. A possibility of a short run on a revised copy is being looked at

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...September –

Date	Name	Serv No	YoB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	ERIC THOMPSON Sgt.	44153	1948	18 02 1968	18 02 1969	
	" "			13 05 1971	04 06 1971	VISIT
2	PHILIP MULGREW	3411756	1948	29 04 1968	07 05 1969	
3	MILLS BUCKLEY	16950	1937	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	† 02.04.07
3	PETER SAINT Bdr	45033	1949	04 11 1970	29 07 1971	
6	JOHN DELLACA	3791355	1945	29 01 1968	28 01 1969	
7	STEVEN BOUTLIS	3787962	1945	02 01 1967	27 09 1967	
7	GARY BESTER	3411737	1948	08 01 1968	03 12 1968	
7	IVAN MILLS S/Sgt.	213051	1934	31 01 1969	05 11 1969	
8	WILLIAM EDWARD	2789911	1947	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	
12	BARRY NUGENT	1411039	1945	03 01 1967	12 12 1967	

12	LARRY BRIDGE	2786506	1946	15 03 1968	18 03 1969	
12	PHILIP JOHNS	4719086	1946	16 09 1968	18 03 1969	
12	STEVEN VOSS	1735605	1948	29 04 1970	18 03 1971	
12	KEVIN GEOGHEGAN	219351	1951	16 12 1970	02 06 1971	131
	" "			02 06 1971	23 12 1971	HQ AFV
13	VICTOR CLAXTON	4410991	1948	17 01 1968	23 12 1968	
14	MERV DART	37821	1942	03 01 1967	09 01 1968	† 2001
14	FRANK IPSA	3786657	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
14	RUSSELL HEWITT	2792435	1948	03 06 1970	04 03 1971	
16	FRANK PEPPER	216683	1948	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	† 27.12.89
16	RONALD DEAN	215527	1944	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
16	BRIAN BLACK	2786469	1946	27 11 1967	26 11 1968	† 18.01.11
16	ALLEN WHEATLEY	2790305	1947	16 09 1969	04 06 1970	
17	JOHN BLAKE	1731550	1945	04 05 1967	13 12 1967	
17	BARRY GUZDER	5714500	1945	10 06 1967	21 05 1968	
17	MAURICE ARCH	43350	1937	02 01 1967	14 11 1967	† 26.08.17
17	ERNEST GALLOWAY T/Bdr	216708	1948	08 01 1968	22 04 1968	
18	BOB WILSON	3791425	1946	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
18	JIM LAWLER Sgt.	28523	1936	18 12 1967	03 12 1968	
19	ROBERT DAVID GOW	61644	1944	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
19	HUBERT ANDREWS	2790121	1947	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	
19	WESLEY HINDMARSH	2791313	1947	30 09 1969	13 08 1970	
19	PHILLIP WAPSHOT	3793468	1947	27 11 1969	18 03 1970	
21	GARRY LEPLAW	217182	1948	05 02 1968	11 02 1969	† 06.12.83
22	IAN BUBB	2792358	1948	13 05 1970	11 03 1971	RAEME
23	GREGORY TOMMASI 2Lt.	3791966	1946	10 03 1970	25 08 1970	131
	" "			25 08 1970	11 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
	GORDON CAMPBELL GUNN	16915	1944	11.03.69	11.03.70	† 23.09.13
24	ROBERT BILLIARDS	2785702	1946	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
24	GEOFFREY CARTHEW	2793339	1949	03 06 1970	09 06 1971	
26	KENNETH McNAMARA	2783740	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
26	JOHN DAVIES Sgt.	29351	1937	07 10 1966	30 04 1967	† 2004
26	RONALD BOALER	130230	1948	20 02 1970	11 02 1971	
28	LEONARD WALKER	3798942	1949	16 12 1970	30 06 1971	Det 131 † 29.01.07
	" "			30 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.

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

Ed – 8 blokes not highlighted is looking decidedly better, but still not acceptable! Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

Just an aside (below) –

| Sept 17 | ERNEST Robert GALLOWAY T/Bdr | 216708 | 1948 | 08 01 1968 | 22 04 1968 |

I'm going to have a stab at this bloke's nickname – was it **"Sonny"**? He was a young Reg I remember from my time in Holsworthy – any further updates? He came from Wollongong?
Interesting – only 3+ months in SVN... **Ed**

. Locator Profiles – we've received **163** and we've sent out **163**. **Ed** – **Any in the mail?**

Just a follow up to an earlier article sent in by **Phil Mulgrew** who sent in an update to his Locator Profile – new residential are location, a new head'n'shoulders etc.

Ed – It got me thinking to say to all of you that if you wan to upgrade your Locator Profiles feel free to send in information and photos. It's very handy to have up to date info.

. 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.

Grahame Dignam sadly advised the following information with regards to the passing of Mark –
“I just received a messenger note from Brett, son of Mark Szypulski, who advised that he passed 3 November 2016.”

	Name: Szypulski, Mark	
	Service No: 313270 Rank: Gunner	
	SVN In: 18 03 1971 SVN Out: 29 07 1971	
	DoB: 22 04 1951 DoD: 03 11 2016	
	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

The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

www.artilleryhistory.org





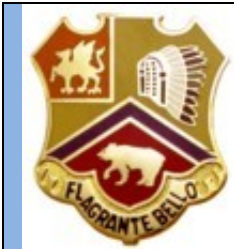
Website link - <http://www.vvaa.org.au/>

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>



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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