

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**

2021 – 55 Years and the Detachment 131 Spirit Lives On: 1966 – 1971



**Army School
of Artillery
1946 – 1998
52 Years
at North Head.**

North Head – a history extracted from the Harbour Trust - originated during the last Ice Age when erosional forces separated it from Hornsby Plateau, transforming it into a 'tied island', linked to the mainland by Manly's sandspit. Of note, the central area of North Head Sanctuary features dunes made up of wind-deposited sands dating back 140,000 years to the Pleistocene Epoch.

Established at North Head in 1936, North Fort is a remnant military complex. Strategically placed at the northern entrance to Sydney Harbour, the now-demilitarised fort formed part of a defence system that spanned 300km of coastline during World War II. At the height of the war, North Fort was manned twenty-four hours per day.

Until 1952, the North Fort Battery featured two 9.2-inch calibre guns. Serviced by a 200-metre-long network of underground tunnels, each was capable of firing a distance of 26.4km. Target coordinates were relayed to these heavy weapons from the nearby Plotting Room.

Located eight metres underground, the concrete-reinforced, bomb-proof Plotting Room is accessible via a camouflaged, shed-like entrance. Despite its name, the structure actually consists of two rooms – the Fortress Plotting Room (FPR) and the smaller Battery Plotting Room (BPR).

The Plotting Room was vital to Sydney's coastal defences during World War II, receiving enemy craft intel from – and sending it to – artillery batteries located along the coast from Port Stephens to Port Kembla, collectively known as Fortress Sydney.

Target course and speed was sent via telephone from observation posts to the Fortress Plotting Room and then onto the Battery Plotting Room, which relayed coordinates to North Fort's guns.

The Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) began filling key wartime positions at North Fort, including the Plotting Room, after being authorised by the government, in August 1941, to "release men from certain military duties for employment in fighting units".

The men and women who operated the Plotting Room, including Patricia Talberg, played a crucial role in the Defence of Sydney during World War II. Due to the highly-classified nature of their work, however, their exploits were not revealed to the general public. In fact, to maintain the veil of secrecy around the underground facility, the Army prohibited photography. Except for a handful of photos captured by an official Army photographer in 1944, there is no other significant photographic evidence of the Plotting Room.

The Army School of Artillery –

**THE SCHOOL OF ARTILLERY
'THE HOME OF THE GUNNER'**



After World War II, the Army School of Artillery opened at North Head. **Gunners lived and trained there from 1946 until 1998, when the school relocated to Puckapunyal, Victoria.**

The former School of Artillery occupies the highest part of North Head and includes the Army Barracks. The Barracks complex contains a collection of art deco buildings that include a parade ground, service areas and sheds, as well as a large area of remnant bushland.

Harbour Trust stewardship

In the early 2000s, the Harbour Trust became the steward of an area of North Head that encompassed the Third Quarantine Cemetery, North Fort, the Army School of Artillery and surrounding bushland. Known as North Head Sanctuary, the site was opened to the public in 2007.

Today, the Harbour Trust volunteers facilitate guided tours of North Fort, including the underground tunnel complex and Plotting Room, enabling visitors to walk in the footsteps of the servicemen and women who defended our shores.

Additionally, the public can pay homage to those who have served and supported the defence of Australia on the Memorial Walk. This paved pathway links five monuments that were erected to remember the major conflict periods in Australia's history.

North Head Sanctuary is home to a variety of businesses including a sculpture gallery, as well as health and well-being providers and a childcare centre and education provider.

We made a bit of a presence in 1987 for the Welcome Home Parade, 3rd October, 1987.

Plus, there must be heaps of memories held by us of our times at this establishments – do you want to share a few?



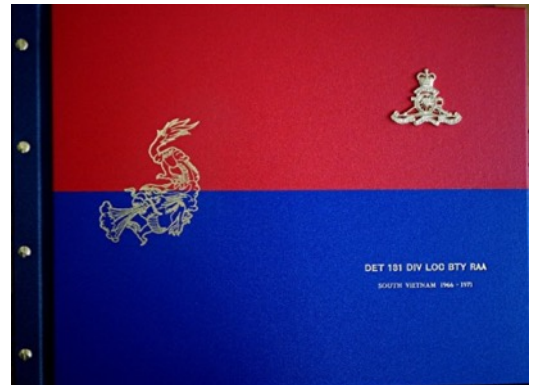
. The “Lost Locator Project”



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 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

. David Dougherty – “Coral” – a continuation from earlier Recollections in *Eyes & Ears* -

“Hi Paul,

Following on from **Bob’s (Bob Billiards)** comments in *E&Es* about he being present at Coral but not being on the “Official” list I would add that I was also there and not shown on that list. A similar situation as to that in the Tracks of the Dragon where my period of service is incorrectly recorded, being short by 3 weeks.

My recollections in regard to my time at Coral/Balmoral now due to time, or is that age, are a little hazy in regard to detail but here is some of what I do remember and similar to that forwarded to you a number of years ago, as well as to Keith.

The advice as I remember was received early on the 13th when I was at 31D and it was to get myself and gear to Arty Tac straight away as I was being sent out to Coral as someone from 12 Fld. Regt. had been killed. Not sure of the correlation with 12 Fld. though.

My first memory was a pissaphone being highly exposed, being in the centre of the base visible to all inside or out. My pit was located on the southern perimeter adjacent to the 2/35 and from memory 2 dusters were also bought in there later.

On one occasion when Perrin carried out a crater analysis I was one of those who went out with him. I can distinctly remember being in trousers only, no shirt and only rifle and the mag on it and thinking that if any NVA were out there we were pretty good targets.

Of spreading out hootchies to collect water for a tub, but not for drinking as mentioned somewhere else that I remember having read.

An air strike falling short on an American company situated a few hundred metres outside the western perimeter.

An ice cream delivery being made by the Americans, something I’d never seen before and I never saw again.

Watching while the dozer was digging a trench to bury NVA dead, who were laid out beside it. For some reason, I had the number 38 in my head but the actual figure is shown as being 34. I think Pablo was also there with me.

The CP looked as I remember like a trench dug by the dozer covered over with sand bags and a bit of a ramp down into it and located back a bit up the slope towards the centre of the base.

At Balmoral, there was the situation of a Vietnamese woman with a couple of kids tagging along who set herself up outside the main entry over a couple of days for anyone prepared to go out to her and the blokes back inside cheering them on.

And of course, the Chinook incident, being one of the persons on board when the radar was left.

With Bob’s comment in relation to socks I never wore them either, as I am sure most didn’t. I distinctly remember though washing my boots out about once a week to get rid of the mud and ooze that would build up in them.

Regards, David”

...more Recollections from Nick Armstrong with regards to Bob Billiards' accounts in last month's *Eyes & Ears* -

. Nick Armstrong – “Hello Paul

Best wishes for 2021. I am writing regarding **Bob Billiards** comments in the December 2020 *Eyes and Ears*, regarding FSB Coral.

Greetings to Bob, we seemed to miss each other at various Coffs Harbour reunions. Any time you are in the Port Lincoln (SA) area, it would be good to catch up. That offer goes for anyone else passing through.

I did not carry a camera in Vietnam, so my memories of Vietnam are somewhat hazy. For the first half of my year in Vietnam, and after Pete Hopper's RTA, I was effectively the senior NCO for the Survey Section. Whenever possible, I preferred to be on operations, rather than remaining at Nui Dat. Time seemed to pass faster, and there was less pressure to try and look busy during the days.

About midway through my 12 months, Sgt Brewer and WO2 Geoff Jebb arrived, giving the section a boost in senior NCO's. I continued to contrive to go on operations whenever possible, and after the Tet offensive we seemed to be out of Phuoc Tuy Province much of the time.

Bob's recollections of the names of the FSB's seem clearer than mine. I remember all the FSB's although not always in correct chronological order. Bob mentions the APC fire incident at FSB Coogee. I was at that FSB and remember viewing the remains, although I do not recall the actual fire. I understood it was caused by a smoke canister discharging in the vehicle.

When Coogee ended, I must have flown to Bien Hoa. I remember spending a day or two there and Geoff Jebb had arrived from Nui Dat. I believe he arranged for Jeff Holden and Ken Woodbine to fly to Coral to do the survey and returned to Bien Hoa that night. It would be best to contact them regarding their movements then, but there were no surveyors at Coral on the first night, as I understand. This was not normal, with the surveyors normally arriving with the guns, carrying out the survey, and then making up part of an LP for the duration of the FSB.

For FSB Coral, we travelled by road convoy from Bien Hoa to the FSB in Australian trucks on the morning of the second day. We remained at the FSB until it was closed. We departed by road, although I do not recall how we returned to Nui Dat. I expect we staged through Bien Hoa, and then by air to Nui Dat.

I only recall one road trip back to Nui Dat, and that was from Anderson FSB at the end of FSB Harrison. That was shortly before Jimmy Menz was killed at FSB Anderson.

I hope these recollections help fill any gaps in the narrative.

Cheers, Nick.”

. A Curiosity – the things you keep – almost following on from **Ken Osborne's** item in December's *Eyes & Ears*! No, I did NOT try to use this currency when I revisited Vietnam as part of a holiday!

Now, I get to the “curiosity” bit – what the hell did 5 MPC*, or for that matter 10 MPC* buy us back in those days? They're possibly worth more now!

Hey, and who was the sheila on the notes – am I correct in guessing “Laura”?



*MPC = Military Payment Certificates

. Netflix intrigue...?

As a Covid 19 pastime I went for a bit of a search to find something "Aussie" to watch and stumbled onto a mystery show called **"Secret City"**. What made it even more interesting was that it had a **drone** discharges a missile onto a suburban home in Adelaide. The Army Unit that controlled the drone is hacked – **NO mention of the unit's name!** The show is basically set in Canberra (even I recognised scenes, especially one at the top carpark in Duntroon - I have a photo taken there) - involves the Govt, the press, all sorts of law enforcement etc and the Chinese - very topical, especially under the current goings ons.

"Secret City" is an Australian political thriller television series based on the best-selling novels "The Marmalade Files", "The Mandarin Code", and "The Shadow Game" by Chris Uhlmann and Steve Lewis. It premiered on Foxtel's Showcase on 5 June 2016 and on Netflix internationally on 26 June 2018."

Ed - It's worthy of a gander at.



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

. Ken Osborne... "Dear Paul, I am happy to be put on the list for mail outs, however living where I am in far south western Victoria I **probably will not have much to contribute** – Really!!! **This brings a smile to my face!!!!!!** I do however keep in touch with a few locators who were with me at Woomera and who also served in Vietnam. Arty blokes are Ted Doust and Frank Perry with whom I get at least a card from each year and on the RAEME side Fred Walter and Des Bailey. Bill Prenter who was a great mate of mine and who died about a decade ago was one who I had a lot of contact with. I was godfather to two of his kids, I still talk to his wife on a regular basis and we shared a lot of things in common, same units, same job, just a short time frame apart. Anyhow if there is anything I can contribute, just let me know, regards Ken Osborne"

"Dear Paul, just to let you know how I got started on building model boats. I had a kit given to me years ago and it sat in a cupboard for I do not know how long, Then, one Christmas about 25 years ago my Mum came to visit from Adelaide and she could talk, so as to take a break from her (I loved my Mum) I got the kit out and then whenever I wanted a spell, I would say I am going to the shed to work on my model and Mum was quite happy with that. So, after a while and quite a few go back and start again episodes I finally got the model built and then the bug hit me. So then, even after Mum went back home I started building another kit model but worked out that they were rather expensive. You could however buy bits and pieces and plans to scratch build if you wanted to. so that is what I did for a while until I took up

some extra challenges. Some plans were for models only about 600mm long and that was OK but when I wanted to make a decent sized model of the "Bounty" I expanded it to 1.5 metres but then I had to make everything, planks, beams, masts and a lot of little parts as the firms that supplied these items were for their standard plans. I could cut planking from boards I'd planed down to about 10mm, ran them through a "thicknesser" to get them all the right width, then cut thin strips on my band saw and away I went. So, after a few years there were quite a few models hanging around the house. Then one day one of the board members of the local maritime museum asked if I was willing to put them on display there, he said for a period of three months and I agreed, my wife was pleased because it got them out of the house but it was nearly three and a half years later that they came home. When they came home there was some damage and missing parts but easily remedied, some of the cannons had been nicked most likely by little kids and they were covered in dust as they were not in cases. I was happy that probably a lot of people got some enjoyment out of them. All of the models except one were sailing vessels and that was a model of the tug "Stirling" that used to operate here in Portland which I donated to them for permanent display.

The result of this display however led to some of the locals asking me if I could make a model for them. One of them wanted a model of a cray boat called the "Rossandrullen" as a present for his brother's wedding and I thought that would



not be a problem as I had been told the original owner still had the plans for it, but when I asked if I could borrow them to make a model, he refused so over the next couple of months armed with camera, tape measure and sketch pads whenever the current owner was absent (he being the one I was making it for) I scratch built the model that is a close a facsimile as you could possibly get. After the brother was married and the model given to him, the brother who had requested I build the model in the first place, asked if I could build another, this time for himself, so I obliged. I was paid to make them, but I calculate I probably got a \$1.00 an Hour, but I was more than happy to do it.

Since then I have made another model of a cray boat, the "Pera" as a 40th birthday present for its owner, again scratch built but did have some plans to work with. Then the Customs officer here in Portland asked if I could make a model of one of the customs patrol vessels for the Melbourne office, so I said why not and again I took it on and delivered it to them. Took about three months, and I had no sooner finished it than I was asked to make another for the Sydney office, this time about the only difference was the livery on the two boats. The first one was the "Corio Bay" vessel and the second was the "Botany Bay" vessel and I got paid 50% more for making the second, so in that case I got about \$1.50 an hour, but in all cases, it has been enjoyable and challenging.

Since I started making models I still have 7 in the house plus my daughter in Melbourne has two and my son has one, there is one in the Warrnambool Maritime Museum and one in the Portland Maritime Museum and I have plans such that I could build another dozen if I was to put my mind to it, but nowadays I have been rather lazy and have not done anything for two years. I am always threatening the wife that I want to build a model of the "Oscar W" a paddle steamer and the plans for it are very detailed and it is nearly six-foot long. I do not think it will be a goer, but I can always Dream. Probably no room in the house either.

One great compliment I got about the "Rossandruhlen" by the daughter of the original owner (who did not let me borrow the plans) was there was only one fault with them, they were painted the wrong colour, when her family owned it, it was painted green and white whereas my models were blue and white, the current colour scheme.

So now having bored you to death, will close, hoping you and yours are fit and well, regards Ken Osborne. The two sailing ships in one photo are - "The Schooner for Port Jackson" which is at Warrnambool and the one at the rear is my model of the "Bounty" and the last one is what one of my friends sent me about commentators in Australia. Ken."



. **Ian Amos** responded to an email with regards to this photo as to who/where/why – I'd ferreted it out of the archives somewhere –

"Dicko,
This is Bravo radar crew September 1967, not long after I arrived.

Standing L-R - next to me is Mick Luff, Lionel Outen, Frank Halliday, Chris Bouilly, John Vickary

Seated L-R - Tony Dodds, Tom King, Frank Ipsa, Graeme Richardson(RAEME)
Missing are Stuart Sporn and Roger Long.

Apologies for any misspelt names.
Ian"

Any comments anyone? Well here we go...

Rob Retrot – "Hi Paul,

I have just had a phone call from Tony Dodds who asked me to draw your attention to the photo at the top of page 12 of the December *E and E*.

He is identified as the person squatting on the left end of the front row. Tony is adamant he is not that person. I must say I agree it is not him, but I don't know who it is.

Perhaps you can put the feelers out and have someone identify this person.

Tony and Helen send their regards and best wishes for 2021 to you and Helen and to all his old mates in 131 Div. Loc. Bty.

Cheers, Rob Retrot."

Keith Ayliffe – "G'day and New Years Greetings.

To you Paul and me old mate Ian Amos.

On page 12 of your great rag I am reliably informed, that on page 12 there is a glaring mistake.

The informant tells me that it is not him "Tony Dodds" that is seated (sorry Kneeling front row left). The informant States he doesn't know who it is.

I'll stick my neck out and suggest it is Frank Pepper!!!

Best Regards and great NY to you and all your readers, Keith."

...and the "Tin Mug" goes to for the correct recognition -

Allen Morley – "Paul

As advised the pic of Bravo radar group is identified incorrectly. Front row, left hand side digger is not the diminutive Tony Dodds. Rather, it is **Roger Long** lighting a gasper. Am."

...Allen continues on with a Vale type of Recollection of a good mate of his -

Roger Long was a bush boy from Victoria. He was a fourth intake Nasho who didn't really like Army life. One of my fondest memories is from our time at Canungra. Roger was on piquet and manning the M-60 machine gun. He fell asleep and the 'enemy' sneaked the gun from him. For punishment Roger had to carry the heavy M-60 for the remainder of our time on jungle training. He did not stop bitching, moaning and complaining for the remainder of our Canungra time. Ask **Stewie Sporn** about that Longie characteristic when they were with Bravo radar in Nui Dat.

Roger's favourite sports were harness racing (trotting) and Aussie Rules. Because he came from near Maryborough Victoria he was a Geelong diehard fan.

For a few Anzac Days we did not march, but instead went to the VFL match at the MCG and drank real beer as you could in those days. Frank Ipsa was with us most years and Mick Campbell joined us one year when we were nearly booted out of the 'G'. We kept in touch and later when I was Sydney based and visited Melbourne we would pass the time of evening with a few beers at the Cricketers' Bar of the Windsor Hotel.

Once I was again headed to Melbourne for business and in the time before mobile phones I phoned his work and asked for him. It was time for a liquid get together. Unfortunately, after I had established my credentials with his office, I was told that he had died. I could get no more information on the details of his demise.





The photo of Roger at Vung Tau back beach sums Longie up absolutely. In one hand is a can of beer, and in the other a cigarette. Allen"

. Australia Day – just a thought...

It appears to have become a “topical” piece again (annually) via social media and general media etc.

“Just a thought” from someone who was born in Australia, whatever that means (maybe not much to some people), and I guess regardless of the supposed origin of the day/date, it is a day where Australians, regardless of origin, can reflect on the greatness of this country.

Our parents/our relatives/their friends lived through one of the greatest threats to Australia - World War 2 – Australians suffered, died and endured hardships to keep our country safe.

If nothing else, let us be FREE to commemorate the 26th January as proud Australians, ALL of us. Ed.

Mail Call...

. **Ken Osborne** – “Dear Paul, great read, the one by Andrew Hastie was good and well thought out, or at least by my standards. The other news items were also good.

Also, I wish to comment on Peter Suckling's little note, what I can say is that the person on the far right back row is definitely **Tilly Devine**. Who the others are I have no idea; the photo is definitely post Woomera and **Russell Kopp** is also definitely “not in the photo”. Russell took his discharge at Woomera and now lives and works in Adelaide and I keep in contact with him and his wife with our annual Christmas Card and an occasional phone call, as I do also with Peter Suckling and his wife Colleen except this year my email to Peter bounced, so he has probably changed it without telling me about it.

At Woomera, I played Rugby League with Peter Suckling, Tilly Devine, Ted Doust and Graeme Richardson who all, served with 131 except Tilly Devine. We were like bad smells popping up everywhere.

If you have Peter's current email I would appreciate it, I still have a letter in my words document waiting to send off to him which I can attach if I get the address, and apart from that everything is starting to go downhill again with people breaking the rules and governments over-reacting. But such is life to quote Ned Kelly. Keep well, regards Ken Osborne.

Have added a couple of photos from Christmas Day of myself and my wife enjoying our Christmas luncheon of oysters, prawns, roast turkey with salads then a bit of plum pudding with threepences in it, just traditional. Omitted the photos of my daughter and son in law who helped us celebrate, nice day was had by all.”



. Bert Blink – Australia Day Honours...

"Hi all,
Have a great Australia Day.
I note that Corporal B, Lieutenant Colonel T and Sergeant W were all awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service.
You would think that not being able to name them was better served by not listing them.
From a hot Scullin ACT, Bert."



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...

. Pete Fletcher – "Hi Paul,

Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to Helen and your good-self, hope all is well with you both during these not so good times.

Veneice and are travelling along pretty well at present after experiencing a not so good 2020 on my part, although I am at present enjoying good health following recovery from my operation to remove a tumour in my bowel in October last year. All treatment has now been completed and a recent colonoscopy performed indicated that all is well in this area of my body which is good news and a great relief for both of us.

Because of restrictions Covid wise we have not been doing any travel but hopefully later next year we will go up north to Pt Macquarie to visit family and friends.

We have been playing golf twice a week with some success and great enjoyment to be able to still do so (sometimes).

We walk from our place at Wamberal to Terrigal Beach regularly which about 6km. We get quite a bit of physical exercise helping us to keep the weight off and maintain reasonable fitness.

I have aspirations to get back to riding my surf board again this summer. I have 2 granddaughters who are learning to surf so that gives me a good reason to get back on the board. We will see how I go with my attempt in this regard. Hopefully I haven't forgotten how to stand up! I'll keep you informed of my progress. Ha Ha!

Stay safe and well my friend. Fletch."

. Brian Campbell – "Paul

Thanks for the email, nothing happening around the NSW Central Coast. Easier to stay at home than going out for the sake of it with all the lockdown conditions and at almost 76 not hard to sit and watch the world go by.

Been very humid of late and having a touch of asthma doesn't help.

Good to see you are enjoying golf still, all the best to you and yours for the new year hoping 2021 is better for all.

Regards, Brian Campbell. "

. Ken Foster – "The situation in Sydney, and Australia in general, is very fluid regarding Covid, have planned trips to Queensland to visit family and had to cancel because of border closures at short notice, we are now under compulsory mask wearing rules in public in the greater Sydney area.

Short shopping trips and restricted visits to locally resident family is the extent of our lives at the moment, lots of reading. Online research and assistance to veterans, thankfully I can still assist in lodging veterans claims and appeals without face to face contact but it is causing strain.

Can't complain others are worse off and whingeing does nothing positive.

Stay well and look after yourself. Regards, Ken."

. Diane and Keith Dean – "Hi Paul

Happy New Year to you too.

Exactly where are you located? From your email, you are in the Northern Hemisphere with weather being so cold.

Things here in Newcastle are going ok. We do not have to wear masks out but I heard one of the local Woolworths has asked customers to now wear them into their stores.

We have to use the Services NSW app to enter and leave a lot of premises, just keeping track of where we are in case of any Covid outbreaks.

Yes, Keith is looking after me. He is going in for cataract surgery on 18th January and again on 1st February. It worries me as he will be able to see exactly what I look like!!!!

We attend the gym to see the Exercise Physiologist 3 times per week, thanks to DVA. At least it gets us out of the house and keeps us moving.

We are still going to our local club each Wednesday and Sunday. We enjoy getting out with our friends for a meal. Beats being in lock down that's for sure.

Regards, Dianne and Keith"

. Phil Connor – “Giddy Paul, greetings and a HAPPY NEW YEAR to you.

Well it has been a strange year 2020. I suppose all of us could write a book on what has occurred in our lives during the past year. Yes, we have had some hot, muggy days but that goes with Sunshine Coast QLD. Recent heavy rain over the Coast in the last week has brought a relief and certainly filled dams, household tanks and gardens.

With the lockdown of my Golf club and my Bowls club in March/April I had discussions with Miriam and my GP about the Right knee replacement (that has been giving me curvy for the last few years) and also discussions about my lower spine with the relevant Specialists. The knee replacement took place in early June and I was ‘cruising’ along quiet comfortably, post Op. Then, in Sept visited my spine Specialist, discussed the spine (lower back...L4 and L5) and we decided to go ahead, following every conceivable scan, etc, and nominated 9 Dec 2020 for the Op.

Separately, in Dec 2019 I had had more cancer cut out of the tongue/mouth (3rd Op in 10yrs) and the Specialist in Sydney said that because of border closures, etc He would arrange for CT scans locally at Buderim Private Hosp. Had the CT scans and ‘all clear’. no metastases in the conclusion. However, within the report it said it showed enlarged heart and calcification in arteries. WHOA...straight into Buderim Private for Angio that discovered 99% blockage to central artery(Stented)...Cardio said walking time bomb. Now doing cardiac rehab and on the mend. Unfortunately, spine Op off for at least 6 months.

As you know our dear Son and Daughter in Law in the States (Indiana), both in medical, Critical care and Intensive care, both came down with Covid19 in November 2020. We knew it was a matter of time being that they are at the coalface. They are OK now and the 4 grandies did not get it. They are getting their normal amount of snow with some days up to their knees overnight on the driveway. Matt gets the ‘monster’ out and clear the large driveway in 30mins.

We, here in QLD this weekend, have had a case of the ‘UK’ Covid strain from one single person. It is 70% more contagious and the QLD has put the greater Brisbane area into a 3-day lockdown. Sunshine Coast is out of that area. Stay healthy and keep an eye on any more BCC’s.

Cheers Mate, Phil.”

. Warwick Brooker – “Happy New Year, Paul and Helen!

Life is pretty much controlled by COVID-19 these days, although we Canberrians can’t complain, as there are no active cases here and haven’t been for some time except for the occasional arrival from overseas who goes straight into quarantine. Regional NSW has been mainly COVID free, but a Sydneysider carried it west to Orange, Nyngan and Broken Hill the other day. The ACT border was quickly closed to travellers from NSW’s infected areas.

We haven’t had any very hot days yet this summer, but next week is supposed to warm up to 35C. Quite a change from last summer’s hot, dry, windy days that fuelled the very extensive and destructive bushfires. WA’s coping that now. We’ve also had far more rain this summer.

Sorry to hear of your BCC. I suspect I have one on my nose. It’s been there awhile. I have an appointment with a skin clinic next month; so perhaps I’ll earn a role in that horror movie you’re talking about.

Stay well! Brookie.”



. Bob Billiards – ‘Paul,

HAPPY NEW YEAR to you as well. Glad to hear that you and Helen are doing well in this pandemic and that you can still get out for shopping and exercise on the course. I presume that you do get exercise when playing golf. The only golf I have played is “Put Put” and was not very good at it.



We have really been spared the problems of other countries in the current pandemic, possibly because we can isolate the country so effectively. Even the state border closures have been very effective and now the “Hot Spot” isolation seems to be as well. We have had 3 cases today in Sydney but realistically I think this will be around for the next couple of years. Mask wearing has finally been mandated in Sydney on all public transport and in public indoor venues, except for Restaurants. Yesterday was the first non-rainy Sunday for a month so beaches and other swimming areas were packed yesterday. I took a grandson out to my model flying club as he is really interested in flying a model aeroplane. He has a quadcopter and he is very good flying it.

Our contact tracing in NSW is excellent and now the state government has set up venue attendance with the “Service NSW” app. I like this app as I have my licences electronically on, my phone and also it lets me know when one of my 4 cars require registration it sends me a text and email.

My youngest daughter and family are back in the Blue Mountains after 3.5 years in Tassie. Joanne has just finished 6 months of Chemotherapy and Cathy was down in Tassie for nearly 6 months as if she came back to NSW, she wouldn’t have been able to get back there unless she did another 14 days’ isolation so we decided it best for her to stay down there. It is good to have them all back here now and it was difficult for me not being able to even get there. We did have phone calls and face time but it just isn’t the same when you need to just put your arms around and hug them.

This week we are heading to Dubbo to spend time with the western district families and friends while the grandkids are home from school. And hopefully the local stores won’t ask for ID and refuse to serve us as it has happened in a couple of country towns to Greater Sydney residents.

Mask wearing has caused me to lose a hearing aid but at least they are insured. Have to sort it out in the next couple of weeks.

Only been doing short walks lately and not sure when we will be doing another long one (I.E > 25Km)

Glad to hear from you other than website stuff and look forward to getting over there in the next couple of years to visit my US cousins in Minneapolis MN and a couple of army friends and then down to Mexico to catch up with another army friend.

Keep safe, wash your hands regularly, try and not touch your face or pick your nose and wear a mask where you can’t social distance. Bob”

. **Peter Creedon** – “Hi Paul

Happy New Year to you and your family as well.

As you say the weather here is really starting to pick up, after having a very wet start to the year which has been great after all the dry years we have had recently. All the doom-sayers are keeping their heads down at the moment.

The government has taken it upon itself to change a word in the National Anthem to appease certain groups in the community, if only that would be enough for them, but it won't. We are coming up to Australia Day so that will bring out all the cries for us to feel guilty about being invaders, I often wonder who these people would have preferred as their invaders (Dutch, Portuguese, French, Spanish).

We have had a small outbreak of the virus in Sydney at the moment so we are asked to take precautions by wearing masks in shopping centres etc. For some states that means complete border lock downs.

For the most part my only outing is to golf on a Thursday, I often wonder if getting up at 4:30 am is really worth the effort. But jokes aside I do enjoy the outing.

Unfortunately, when the mate and I were returning home from golf last Thursday we witnessed the frailty of life.

A car driven by a suspected drug affected driver left the road and cleaned up two seventeen year olds on the footpath killing one of them. The police were able to use the dashcam from my car to confirm the driver's culpability. The mate and I attended to the driver who continued for about 100 meters down the footpath before stopping, whilst others attended the victims, thinking he may have had a medical episode. After getting him out of the car we realised he had absolutely no idea that he had hit someone.

There are rumblings here at the moment to lessen the pressure on the court system by giving minor drug users up to three warnings and fines before facing court. They wouldn't be thinking like that if they were there last Thursday.

To finish off, your letter finds Pauline and I and all the family well and travelling OK.

Kind Regards, Peter & Pauline (Cruising Creedons)”

. **Mike Butler** – “Hi Paul.

Thanks for your note and Happy New Year to you also.

Not a lot going on here - survived Xmas without too much drama and the Covid restrictions are progressively easing. Only have to wear a mask in supermarkets etc and there is still a limit on gatherings but nowhere near as restrictive as before Xmas. We have a lot of ungrateful tennis players who don't like the restrictions for the Oz open - but I reckon that they shouldn't have let them in anyway. Just a recipe for disaster following all our hard work to get the numbers down.

We have a AGM for our local Box Hill VVAA group in early February and we're being told that this year will be the final large scale commemorative event at the Melbourne Shrine for VV day. There will be VVDay commemorations held at the Shrine in future years but scaled down. We haven't been to the local RSL since last January but are going to a Mike Brady concert at the Greensborough RSL next month - should be good fun.

Weather is starting to heat up in Melbourne following a rather cool January so far and a wet December - good for the garden though. Mike.”

. **Wade Cooper** – “Paul,

Great to hear from you.

Winter – half your luck. I hope you are avoiding all things COVID!

Glad to hear the cheek is recovering – doesn't sound pleasant.

All good back in Aust. This time last year the entire east coast was on fire – this time, lots of rain and greenery!

Cricket has been good up until yesterday, Indians finally won. COVID seems to be fairly in check. Melbourne is trying to run the Australian Open, alas a lot of the people coming in for it have a dose of the COVID. Can't win!

I do hope you and yours are well. Wade.”

. **Peter Bruce** – “Hello Paul

Happy New Year to you and your family. Hope all is well and stays well over your way. Up here in 'regional NSW' we

aren't affected too much by the Covid menace however we do have to comply with all the various restrictions and protocols. One example is today I took Legacy flowers to a lady who turned 94 and lives in an independent unit in a retirement village. I had to complete 'the form' to say I had not been to any hot spots or near or with anyone who had any symptoms etc. They check you temp and if ok you can go in. Our Legacy lady was very much appreciative of her birthday flowers especially as I had dragged my twin four-year-old grandsons along to wish her happy birthday. She is a wonderful example of maturing gracefully and still helps out in the live-in area of the village, serving tea and coffee etc.

Some news for you and members of *Eyes and Ears*. I caught up today with a member of our RSL Sub-branch who I had not known was an old Locator! He was a National Serviceman and in Vietnam on LP 31A (for most of his tour) during March 68 until Mar 69. **Larry Bridge** is his name and certainly quite a character. After his stint in the Army he joined the NSW Police Force and stayed with them for around 12 years. He certainly has some interesting stories to tell. Some of course may not be suitable for publication. He does not use a computer so I printed off your last epic and presented it to him. I said to him that he might recognise some of the names and sure enough, the first name he looked at, he knew! As he does not use a computer, I will print off further editions and pass them on to him.

As the holiday season draws to a close here on the Mid North Coast of NSW, we are having some amazing weather. Our local creek has been opened artificially to the sea and an influx of fresh sea water has made the place a haven for tourists and locals alike. Unfortunately, our estuary closes over very quickly and is only opened when the creek/lake height

reaches a certain trigger point for council. Ongoing issues of course about the best outcome for the lake and all concerned.

We have been busy at home with a few house renovations of late. Two projects yet to be finished. New flooring goes down on Monday and a change to bedroom cupboards the following Saturday. Then we have run out of funds and will have to build up the kitty again. Apart from that, all is well in our world. Grandkids coming over tonight for a sleepover. We were going to take them to a nearby National Park to camp but everything is booked out for the last weekend of school holidays and of course the Australia Day long weekend.

Take care over there and all the very best to you and your family. By the way, you really do put together a wonderful newsletter, helped of course by the many members who submit articles to you. I wish I could say the same about our 4th Field Regiment (SVN) Old Boys newsletter!

Best wishes, Peter, Peter Bruce, OAM, JP. President, 4th Field Regiment (SVN) Old Boys"

...more from Peter -

. Peter Bruce – has a request for help –

"G'day everyone

I have received the following message and wondering if anyone could help out at all.

Can you help?

I am making inquiries on behalf of John Shelley, the brother of Graham William Shelley.

Graham William Shelley, Service number 1735604 (National Service) disappeared in the early 1980s. His vehicle, a two-tone Holden was found by police outside Derby W A. It is understood that the doors were open, the radio was playing and Graham's diary was on the front seat. Subsequently, Graham's brother, John commenced his investigation into his brother's disappearance. Inquiries with Vietnam Vets in Townsville, (where Graham had lived for a time), The Australian War Memorial, Salvation Army, etc shed no light on what may have happened to Graham.

Graham was born in Kingaroy on 12 June 1947. He was a Gunner with initially the 1st Field Regiment (7 January 1970 to 4 February 1970) and the 4th Field Regiment (5 February 1970 to 7 January 1971). There is some suggestion that he may have been attached to 1 RAR at some time, probably as an F O.

Indications are that Graham Shelley was very unsettled after his return from Vietnam as were many others.

Although he disappeared some 40 years ago, the family has had no closure. John is fully aware that his brother is most likely deceased. However, he would like to speak to anyone who served with his brother. Even if they cannot assist with information regarding Graham's disappearance they may be able to pass on some "general" information about this lost veteran. If anyone can assist, could they please contact me at hookin1947@gmail.com or on 0415 375 968. I am acting on John's behalf at his request.

Regards

John Cunningham, (Formerly 4 RAR SVN 1968/1969)

Regards, Peter, Peter Bruce, OAM, JP. President, 4th Field Regiment (SVN) Old Boys, pjbruce8@bigpond.net.au"

. Terry Erbs – "Giddy Paul,

Like you in lockdown, we had the similar hand washing & mask wearing experience. The initial lockdown started late March in Brisbane and really wasn't a great imposition except for the panic buying which stripped the shelves of toilet paper! Aspley Leagues Club sold all their stock at cost, so I had plenty of beer & wine to survive the lockdown, which really only limited our travel and social activities. We are so lucky living in Australia compared to some other countries where Covid-19 is widespread and affecting our age group. Our life is near normal, I'm now used to wearing a mask when required and providing contact details for possible tracing purposes!

Like many families, the initial lockdown forced everybody to work from home. Our daughter & husband had the greatest challenge, working at home with 2 children! But by mid-year schooling had returned to normal but interestingly she's still working from home several days a week – it's the new "norm" for many, and more productive too!

Our son and daughter-in-law, working in Myanmar [Burma], fortuitously were back home when Australia's borders closed in late March. They've now settled back into Brisbane and fulfilling their contracts in Myanmar and the Pacific region remotely, thanks to decent internet links. I don't think they'll be working O/S for a while but maybe he'll be able to fly about the Pacific region later this year.

"Doc" Sheedy held his traditional Australia Day lunch, and with John & Maureen Bristow, we shared a good feed and a few beers. They are all well, and when state border closures permit, spending time with family interstate and John's still catching lots of fish! I ring Keith Ayliffe regularly, who is slowly recovering from a hip replacement and frustrated at not being able to drive yet. With several Covid-19 vaccines available soon and hopefully with no further breaches of hotel quarantine, from sunny Queensland hoping for a brighter 2021 for everyone.

Cheers Terry."

From the Advocate's Desk...

Our professional Advocate's contact details: -

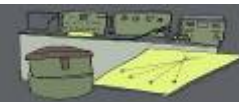
Peter Pioro JP - email contact: piorowp@ozemail.com.au

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.





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

Those bloody face masks. Now in Sydney people have to wear masks in shopping malls, on public transport, in supermarkets and other potentially crowded locations. Not everyone complies, so the media select certain transgressions against the mask requirement and show police tackling such miscreants.

I have a hearing problem – recognised by DVA as being service related – and wear hearing aids to assist my hearing. These are the type with a sensor in the ear canal connected to a behind the ear microphone. Every time I come to remove the mask I am wearing; the mask loops inevitably catch the connecting device and consequently my hearing aid flips onto the floor/ground/car seat etc. It's all rather frustrating and I bet that I am not the only mask wearer who has this trouble.

Victorians this week have found that flying tennis players and officials in from Covid infestation spots inevitably brings more virus infections into the country. So, these precious people sometimes complain loudly on anti-social media when held up in hotel quarantine despite being advised before their flights that anyone testing positive to Covid would result in all people on the flight being quarantined. So far, some 72 tennis travellers have 'suffered' in this way.

Then today, rather than announcing another border closure, Victoria's Premier Demonic Dan Andrews pulled a different but related rabbit out of the tennis hat. There was a leak that past tennis champion, Margaret Court, was to be upgraded in her Australian honours category on Australia Day. Court has been very vocal in opposing same sex marriage, poofs, lesbians etc.

So, Demonic Dan said "I do not support that. I do not believe that she has views that accord with the vast majority of people across our nation, that see people particularly from the LGBTIQI community as equal and deserving as dignity, respect and safety."

Looks like Dan can have his opinion, but Court is not allowed her opinion. It's a strange world in which we live in this internet age.

Regards, Allen



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

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: **Tuesday, 9th February, 2021 at 1100hrs**

Venue: **Venue and Zoom link will be advised.** You're all welcome ??????????HOW??????????????

Venue: Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, 26 Humphries Rd., Wakeley.

Ph (02) 9604 9975 and for directions - <http://www.canleyheightsrsl.com.au/contact-us/> You're all welcome.

. **Treas/Sec** - A few well chosen words of wisdom from the Sec/Treas -

"**Lost opportunities**.....We have had a number of enquiries and vets have expressed intentions to join the 131 Association. A word of warning "**Don't leave it till later**" - time marches on. Your New Year's resolution can be done now!! If you have ever said "One day I'll join!" you are truly a 1960's GUNNER!

Instead be a 2000s' NIKE MAN and "JUST DO IT!" The Links to the Sec/Treas are in this newsletter - you will get a warm welcome home. Grahame." Email sectreas131locators@gmail.com

Web site - 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...February –

Date	Name	Serv. No	YoB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	JIM MENZ	38838	1946	10 10 1967	18 02 1968	† 18.02.68 KIA
2	ROGER McDONNELL	2784019	1945	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
3	ROBERT GIBSON	2787361	1947	29 01 1968	07 02 1969	
3	EDWARD HENSON	2788331	1947	16 09 1968	27 08 1969	
4	OLAF ASMANIS	3796272	1947	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	
5	IAN YERBURY Capt.	43129	1944	{05 05 1967	05 03 1968	† 1989
	" "			{05 02 1971	18 11 1971	131/12 Fd REGT
5	RICHARD FLAVELL	3791902	1945	23 09 1968	04 06 1969	
5	GEORGE CLARK	2412252	1947	{20 01 1969	21 01 1970	
	" "			{09 01 1967	27 09 1967	1 ARU/131
5	STEPHEN HALL	4720327	1948	27 11 1969	13 08 1970	
6	WAYNE WHITEHEAD	3791969	1945	N/A		
6	MICK HABBEN	3788307	1945	05 05 1967	20 12 1967	
7	LINDSAY BLACK Sgt.	213794	1940	30 04 1970	04 08 1970	131 † 2009
	" "			05 08 1970	12 03 1971	4 Fd REGT
8	ROBERT RAMSAY	2788108	1947	16 09 1968	27 08 1969	
8	IAN CAMPBELL	3798378	1949	10 02 1971	07 06 1971	131
	" "			07 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd REGT
9	WILLIAM HOLMES	61040	1937	1969	1969	† Unknown
9	GEOFF WOOD	2783898	1945	04 05 1967	13 12 1967	† 26.04.07
9	CHRIS ARMISHAW	2781291	1945	04 05 1966	27 10 1966	† 10.02.70
9	GARY WORRALL	43796	1945	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
9	NEVILLE HASTINGS	1730813	1945	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
10	ERIC WILLIAMS	1735449	1948	13 02 1970	04 02 1971	
10	GRAHAME SMITH	2792939	1947	30 05 1970	26 05 1971	
11	DENNIS MALLOY	3795057	1948	22 07 1969	16 07 1970	
11	DESMOND BAILEY Sgt	18687	1943	13 05 1967	14 05 1968	RAEME - Radar
12	ROSS GUNNELL	5714499	1945	05 05 1967	27 09 1967	
12	LEIGH BAKER	3789657	1945	10 06 1967	23 04 1968	
12	ANTHONY SHELDRAKE	5716358	1948	04 11 1969	13 08 1970	
14	ERNEST NEWBOLD	2783771	1945	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
14	KEVIN HEENAN	3794777	1948	27 11 1969	13 08 1970	
14	MARCUS ROBINSON	2791229	1948	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	

16	DAMIAN McMANUS	3787689	1945	20 05 1966	29 05 1967	
16	LUIGI LANERA	3795443	1947	25 11 1969	12 11 1970	RAEME
16	TERENCE HUNT	3792120	1947	19 02 1968	21 02 1969	
17	ADRIAN SPENCER	3794631	1948	28 10 1969	13 08 1970	
18	TERENCE McMANIS	44277	1950	30 05 1970	09 10 1970	
21	WILLIS (BILL) WIGHT 2Lt.	39136	1945	12 01 1967	23 04 1968	
23	GEOFFREY JEBB WO2	24660	1930	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	
23	GRAEME SALTER	3792618	1947	16 09 1968	27 08 1969	
23	GRAEME JENNION	3796241	1947	24 03 1970	04 03 1971	
24	GREG GREEN	2784565	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
24	ALBERT JACKA	39856	1950	16 12 1969	11 03 1971	AACC
25	ROBERT MILLER	36499	1939	05.11.69 & 08.4.70	28.11.69&02.08.70	† 29.12.17 RAEME
27	DONALD PERRY WO2	38675	1936	15 04 1970	19 11 1970	
28	PARICK GOWANS LT COL	57036	1933	09 09 1965	19 09 1965	VISIT
	" "			11 03 1971	04 01 1972	AATTV
28	NORBERT KROLL	218285	1948	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	
28	BRIAN LESLIE MITCHELL	2412582	1949	14 03 1968	26 03 1969	
28	KIM MCGRATH	2795249	1950	N/A	N/A	

WE WILL REMEMBER JIM MENZ.

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

Ed – 11 blokes not highlighted is not great, especially out of a total birthdays for the month being for the blokes known to be with us being 38 – what's that almost 29% not Located! That's abysmal.ok, it's over to you.

Richard Albert Flavell – his birthday is on the 5th as listed above – “Nasho” from Melbourne, will turn 76 in February. Couldn't find any notices of passing in my searches. **No one got any ideas?**

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 163 and we've sent out 163. Ed – Surley we can crack a few more this year – any New Year Resolutions to do one?

. **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

Ron HARRIS, RIP - (131 Div Loc Bty RAA) SASR ... Killed SVN 17 Jan 1969



Name: Harris, Ronald Arthur

Service No: 5410968 Rank: L/Corporal

SVN In: 18 06 1968 SVN Out: 17 01 1969

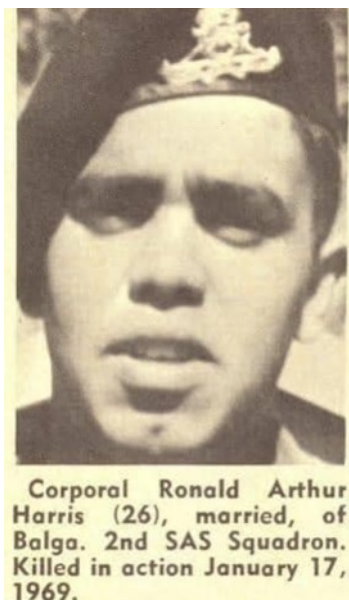
DoB: 14 04 1942

DoD: 17 01 1969

Lest We Forget



Peter Ravelje – forwarded the following notice re: the passing of an Ex-Locator –



Today we pause to remember the life and service of 5410968 Corporal Ronald Arthur Harris, SASR, who was accidentally killed on the 17th of January 1969 whilst serving in South Vietnam.

Ronald (Harry) Harris was born in Western Australia on 14 April 1942. He enlisted in the Army on 5 September 1960 and was allocated to the Royal Australian Artillery. He underwent SAS selection in 1966 and was posted to SASR on 21 October 1966. Harry transferred to the Royal Australian Infantry on posting to SASR. Harry came from 131 Divisional Locating Battery with the rank of Lance Bombardier and retained his stripe on posting to SASR.

Harry was tragically killed on 17 January 1969 when he was accidentally shot during a six-man reconnaissance patrol in South Vietnam. Harry, an indigenous Australian, was mistaken for a Viet Cong when returning from an observation post to the Patrol living point.

“Friendly” (or “Not So Friendly”) Fire - Australian Deaths in Vietnam

Vietnam War (source - Wikipedia) – the following was prompted in the Vale above by the cause of death to **Lance Corporal Ronald Arthur Harris** being killed by so-called “friendly fire”. It prompted me to go searching for Australian statistics, which I couldn’t find, but led me to the following information. **Ed**

It has been estimated that there may have been as many as 8,000 friendly fire incidents in the Vietnam War;¹ one was the inspiration for the book and film *Friendly Fire*.

3 January 1966, near Bao Trai, at midnight, Sergeant Jerry Morton from 'C' Company, the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment had called in marker white phosphorus rounds ahead of the company from the supporting New Zealand gun battery on a suspected enemy position. However, due to the bad coordinates given by Morton, the rounds instead landed on the Australian forces. Morton along with another Australian soldier were killed and several others wounded.

6 February 1967, twelve rounds from New Zealand artillery accidentally landed on the Australian 'D' Company 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, killing four and thirteen injured in west of Song Rai river between Nui Dat and Xuyen Moc District.

16–17 June 1968, HMAS *Hobart*, USS *Boston* and USS *Edson* were attacked by US aircraft. At 03:09, *Hobart's* radar picked up an aircraft approaching with no IFF transponder active. At 03:14, the aircraft fired a single missile at the ship which killed one sailor, wounded two others and damaged the ship. Two minutes later, the aircraft made a second pass and fired two missiles which caused further damage, killed another sailor and wounded six others. The aircraft came around for a third attack run, but was scared off when *Hobart's* forward gun turret, under independent control, fired five rounds at it. At 03:30, USS *Edson*, in company with *Hobart*, reported coming under fire, and *Hobart's* captain ordered both destroyers and USS *Theodore E. Chandler* to take up anti-aircraft formation. At 05:15, the three destroyers linked up with the cruiser USS *Boston* (which had been hit by a missile from another aircraft) and the escorting destroyer USS *Blandy*, and continued anti-aircraft manoeuvring. Debris collected from *Hobart* and the other ships indicated that the missiles were of United States Air Force (USAF) origin. The attacks on *Hobart* and the other ships were the capstone of a series of firing incidents between 15 and 17 June, and an inquiry was held by the USN into the incidents, with three RAN personnel attending as technical advisors. The inquiry found that a few hours before the attack on *Hobart*, Swift boats PCF-12 and PCF-19, along with the USS *Dume*, were attacked by what they identified at the time as hovering enemy aircraft, but were believed to be friendly planes; PCF-19 was sunk in the attack. F-4 Phantoms of the USAF Seventh Air Force, responding several hours after the attack on the Swift boats, were unable to distinguish between the radar signature of surface ships and airborne helicopters, and instead opened fire on *Hobart*, *Boston*, and *Edson*.

1 May 1970, on military operations in Phuoc Toy Province a burst of machine gun fire followed by a calls for the medic split the night, an Australian machine gunner opened fire on soldiers of the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment without warning, killing two and wounded two other soldiers.

20 July 1970, patrol units of 'D' Company 8th Battalion, 1st Australian Task Force outside the wire at Nui Dat called in a New Zealand battery fire mission as part of a training exercise. However, there was confusion at the gun position about the fire corrections issued by the inexperienced Australian officer with the patrol. The result was two rounds fell upon the patrol, killing two and wounding several others.

24 July 1970, New Zealand artillery guns accidentally shelled an Australian platoon, 1 Australian Reinforcement Unit, (1 ARU), killing two and wounding another four soldiers.



131 Locators Association is always on the lookout for new financial members. With the establishment of the web site we continue to be burdened with the ongoing cost of maintenance etc and we need to be able to support this effort equally.

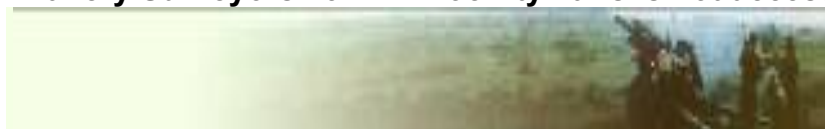
So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the *Eyes & Ears* regularly you could bite the bullet and email Graeme Dignam:sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join - Memberships are available for 1 year or longer deposit a DONATION direct (add your name) to the associations account at "A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133"

Hope we hear from you?

Website: <http://www.131locators.org.au>

. Other related sites...

Artillery Surveyors 131 Div Loc Bty...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 Det 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



www.artilleryhistory.org



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

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

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

The Dept of Veteran's Affairs has launched a new mental health initiative to assist veteran's experiencing the affects of mental illness and their families. Providing information and fact sheets about understanding mental illness, links and contact information for accessing support, and online resources for health professionals, this website focuses on helping veterans identify early warning signs of mental illness to effectively manage their mental illness and seek treatment. For more info or to access, please visit www.at-ease.dva.gov.au

. 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...



Dedicated to the men of the 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery who served in Vietnam from 1966-1971. We left Fort Sill in October 1966 for Vietnam. We originally were at Bear Cat, Nui Dat and Xuan Loc. We later were in many other locations in Vietnam. We also welcome our Australian and New Zealand Allies to whom we owe so much.

It is also dedicated to those members of the 1/83rd who did not return. We will never forget their sacrifice. Website: [http: www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com](http://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com)



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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

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