

THE EYES and EARS

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

Editor: Paul 'Dicko' Dickson email: 131eyesandears@gmail.com Vol 14 No 12 December 2021 No 161

Official newsletter of the 131 Locators Association Inc ABN 92 663 816 973

web site: <http://www.131locators.org.au>

Supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs



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



DET.131 DIV LOC BTRY NOTICE BOARD

*Best Wishes
to everyone for a
Happy New Year*

2022

Another Ernie Newbold intro-card.

A continuing reflection on the year that was, and remains...

Paul Dickson

This opening article, I thought last year, would be a once off! But, here we are again, as this year, 2021, continued marking no real changes.

We did manage to resurrect ANZAC Day in some form amongst other smaller ceremonies. However, planning, as it is today, is very difficult through the unreliability of unforeseen “preventative” measures being activated.

Obviously, COVID 19 had some spare time to produce offspring, and I guess will continue to do so.

But enough of that, I would like to express my thanks to all of you for your support, directly and indirectly, as we kick off next month into our 13th year of publication.

Let 2022 keep us safe and well. I certainly look forward my continuing communications with all of you as it makes this whole exercise very worthwhile.

I extend our thoughts to you and your families.

May we remain strong.

. 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

. **Vic Danko** – thought this was a classic!



The Infantry are the same everywhere!

. **Keith Ayliffe** forwarded the following transcript – it's a really interesting read -

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021

Letter to the ABC and reporters - Mark Willacy, Alexandra Blucher and Dan Oakes. - on behalf of November Platoon, 2012 -

1. We call for an independent review of the ABC story published on October 20, 2020. 2. We call for the ABC to publish a full correction to this story including an unqualified, genuine apology to the members of November Platoon.

3. We request a written apology from the ABC and the reporters to the men and families of November Platoon.

One year ago, you published an article based on the account of a US Marine who alleged that November Platoon of the 2nd Commando Regiment had executed a "prisoner" in Afghanistan in "mid-2012".

In this story, the ABC stated that, "A United States Marine Corps (USMC) helicopter crew chief says Australian special forces shot and killed a bound Afghan prisoner after being told he would not fit on the US aircraft coming to pick them up."

[1]

This is an appalling and preposterous lie. The ABC carries the responsibility of this gross failing of basic journalistic practice.

The entire story is based on the account of one man who insists on using a pseudonym yet, bizarrely, agrees to have his face shown.

This 'former Marine' claims he saw members of November Platoon "tackle and hogtie" seven prisoners then, upon being told that a US helicopter only had room for six prisoners, "And you just heard this silence and then we heard a pop. And then they said, 'OK, we have six prisoners'. So it was pretty apparent to everybody involved in that mission that they had just killed a prisoner that we had just watched them catch and hogtie."

The impact of this story has been immense, particularly given that it was published on the evening of October 20, 2020, dominating the news cycle on the following day.

That day, 21 October 2020, was the eighth anniversary of the death of Corporal Scott Smith, who was a member of the November Platoon Group, and therefore one of the accused in your article. On the evening of 21 October 2020, members of November Platoon gathered at the North Bondi RSL to join the mother of Scott Smith to commemorate his sacrifice, an event that is conducted each year. At the gathering that night, the impact of the allegation in your article was seen and felt in the emotions of all of us who were there and knew it to be false and feared the impact on the memory of our service and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country.

Page 1 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021

This story was based on the unsubstantiated claims of one US Marine whose account cannot form the basis for the assertions made by the ABC. In the following 12 months there has been no follow up or correction to the published story. We write to the ABC and the contributing journalists responsible for the article, Mark Willacy, Alexandra Blucher and Dan Oakes to ask the following:

1. Why did you publish the allegation that members of November Platoon summarily executed a 'prisoner' based on the word of one US Marine "eyewitness"?

2. What research did you do to establish the authenticity of this US Marine's claim about what he allegedly "heard" over a push-to-talk radio communication?

3. What expert advice did you base your story upon, in particular with regard to the tactical facts of the mission?

4. Why were no members of November Platoon interviewed before, or subsequent to, the publishing of this significant and defamatory article? This is a particularly egregious omission given the journalists named above have directly engaged with members of November Platoon. Both Dan Oakes and Mark Willacy have tracked down and messaged members of November Platoon via personal social media, including public posts referencing members, or through other

military commendations. Additionally, another key ABC contributor to Defence reporting, Chris Masters, was supported by the November Platoon Commander, Heston Russell, in the development, and post release, of his book "No Front Line". Masters would have been able to provide immediate advice and contact details to allow a proper examination of the claims in this story at the time and in the year since it was published without follow up.

5. Do you accept this article breached the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics? [2]

6. The MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics does not include, worryingly, a requirement for 'balanced' reporting. However it does require journalists to exercise 'Fairness'.

Can you explain how this article provides a "fair" account of the specific allegation given it only included the version of the "eyewitness" whilst ignoring over 40 Australian Veterans implicated through the article's generic reference to November Platoon, 2012?

Page 2 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021 7. Why is the only follow up to this disgraceful story an online post to the "Correcting the Record" section of the ABC Media Centre issued by ABC 'Communications Lead' Sally Jackson? [3]

In this article, Ms Jackson defends the reporters mentioned above but does not provide any evidence that can independently confirm the serious allegation of murder. This article further states of Heston Russell that, "We have no knowledge that he was even on the raid in question."

Why have the reporters not since contacted Heston Russell to ascertain where he was at the time?

8. The article further states that the US Marine discussed the incident with his crewmates, alleging, "This was the first time we saw something we couldn't morally justify, because we knew somebody was already cuffed up, ready to go, taken prisoner and we just witnessed them kill a prisoner."

Who are the "crewmates" the Marine spoke with and what were their accounts of this alleged incident? Why were these not mentioned in the story?

9. The article further states that an unnamed Commando from Oscar Platoon said that the US Drug Enforcement Agency refused to work with November Platoon, stating, "I remember talking to [DEA agent] afterwards, and he said, 'We're not going out with those f***ing guys ever again'. Every DEA team that went through there loved working with us and had no problem, but November platoon was the first platoon that the DEA said they wouldn't work with," the former commando said. "Something obviously went down."

Given the DEA did work extensively with November Platoon before and after this alleged incident, why did the ABC publish this falsehood without challenge?

10. Will the reporters publish a follow up story with corrections to the article published on 20 October 2020 so that our families, our children, are not further impacted by this grotesque misinformation?

The Facts.

We jointly write to provide you with the information that you would have easily been able to access should you have sought to do so before publishing your article, or in the year since.

Page 3 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021 Below are the facts of how impossible, let alone implausible, the accusation made by your US Marine "eyewitness" is. This information could have easily been confirmed by any Veteran with on the ground experience, while others could easily be confirmed by records and reporting held by the Australian Department of Defence, before publication.

1. "A United States Marine Corps (USMC) helicopter crew chief says Australian special forces **shot and killed a bound Afghan prisoner** after being told he would not fit on the US aircraft coming to pick them up." - from ABC article 20 October 2020 "He has told ABC Investigations he was a door gunner providing aerial covering fire for the Australian soldiers of the 2nd Commando Regiment during a **night** raid in Afghanistan's Helmand Province in mid-2012."

"We had done the drug raid, the Aussies actually did a pretty impressive job, wrangling all the prisoners up," 'Josh' (quoted US Marine) said.

"We just watched them tackle and hogtie these guys and we knew their hands were tied behind their backs." 'Josh' said. In a direct conversation with reporter Mark Willacy on 28 September 2021, he stated that these quotes from 'Josh' were made with regards to a previous mission, not this particular night mission! Mark Willacy made this statement after being questioned by Heston Russell on the plausibility, let alone possibility of someone being able to "see" "wrangling all the prisoners up" under night vision goggles from several thousand feet in the air, flying at night in Helmand province, let alone "watched them tackle and hogtie" with their hands "tied behind their backs".

2. In response to a Daily Telegraph article by Jonathan Moran questioning the accuracy of the ABC report, the ABC Response on 28 October [3] stated that, "The ABC stands by the story. The ABC is aware former Commando Heston Russell has disputed the allegation in the report. However, we have no information he was there at the time. As we have reported, the US Marine heard the shot over the radio communications in which he and his Marine crew on the Huey UH-1Y helicopter were included. They also heard the conversations between the US pilots and the Australians on the ground before and after the shot. **Prior to this the Huey crew was providing close aerial gun support to the Australians and saw prisoners being rounded up and bound.**" [3]

The above directly infers that 'Josh' SAW all of these actions conducted, at night, under night vision goggles, from a moving Huey thousands of feet above a Commando night raid with the DEA in Helmand. When Heston Russell spoke with Mark Willacy on 28 September 2021, a conversation that was witnessed by at least one other person in the Avid Reader Bookstore, West End, Brisbane, Mark Willacy indicated that 'Josh's' comments relating to actually "seeing" Australian soldiers

Page 4 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021 tackling and “hog” tying up prisoners were actually from a previous daytime mission. This followed Mark Willacy acknowledging the impossibility of ‘Josh’ being able to physically see this during the night time alleged incident.

3. ‘Josh’ is further quoted saying the Australian Commandos then called up the US aircraft to pick them and about seven prisoners up.

a. He says the Americans only had room on the aircraft for six.

b. “And the pilot said, ‘That’s too many people, we can’t carry that many passengers.’ And you just heard this silence and then we **heard a pop**. And then they said, ‘OK, we have six prisoners.’”

“Heard a pop” over the radio. All Australian Special forces members operated push-to-talk radios. This requires the radio microphone to be manually depressed in order to transmit by any individual person.

i. During all nighttime operations, Commandos operated with suppressors attached to our weapon systems in order to reduce flash and sound, collectively called the ‘signature’ of weapons firing, so as to reduce the ability to be detected and targeted by the enemy.

ii. The statement by ‘Josh’ means that the person transmitting over the radio would have needed to be standing next to, or very close to, the alleged person firing a weapon, and depressing their microphone in order to deliberately or accidentally capture the sound of a shot being fired. Furthermore, If ‘Josh’ did indeed hear “a pop”, this does not prove that he heard the sound of a suppressed “crack” of an M4 or 417 rifle being fired, as carried by us on these missions. It could have been a variety of sounds including radio static, or the sounds of a smoke grenade being used to mark the helicopter extraction site. Regardless, this sound would have been captured on the radio transmission recordings.

iii. The only people that would have been speaking by radio communications to the aviation assets on the ‘air net’ - which is a frequency completely separate to the ‘Platoon internal net’ - would have been the Platoon JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller), using the individual callsign of November Juliette, or the Platoon Signaler, using the callsign November Charlie.

iv. Both November Juliette and November Charlie are positioned alongside and within the tactical team of the Platoon Commander, call sign November Alpha. Given this group of three is responsible for a large amount of sensitive tactical and operational conversations and communications, they are never positioned with, or permitted to linger around, any detainees (we don’t call them prisoners) as a matter of

Page 5 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021 training and standard operating procedure, so as to avoiding the potential for any Tactics, Techniques or Procedures (TTPs) from being overheard by any detainees.

v. Should any of these Platoon Headquarters members find themselves near a detainee, or group of detainees, they would move away before conducting any such transmissions, or the detainees would be relocated away from the November Alpha, Charlie and Juliette as a matter of standard procedure to allow such communications to occur.

Therefore, there is no way that the “pop” that ‘Josh’ claims to have heard could possibly have been a gunshot from a member of November Platoon shooting a detainee.

4. “So it was pretty apparent to everybody involved in that mission that they had just killed a prisoner that we had just watched them catch and hogtie,” he (‘Josh’) said.

5. ‘Josh’ says neither he nor any of his crew spoke about what had just happened. i. Was ‘Josh’ asked why he had decided to only now speak of this incident, eight years after the deployment?

ii. Did ‘Josh’ approach the ABC or was he approached by the ABC? iii. What support is currently being offered to ‘Josh’ given at least one other ABC sourced whistle-blower has been lost to suicide during the conduct of the Afghanistan Inquiry?

iv. Were any of ‘Josh’s’ crew interviewed by the ABC and if so, why are their statements not included?

v. Has ‘Josh’ provided his allegations as evidence to the IGADF, AFP or OSI so as to substantiate these meeting the rules of evidence?

6. “We were all being recorded on our comms,” he (‘Josh’) said.

Have you requested access to these from the Department of Defence including the submission of a FOI? (Every mission’s communications were indeed recorded).

7. “All of us were pretty aware of what we just witnessed, and kind of didn’t want to be involved in whatever came next.” (‘Josh’)

i. Who else “witnessed” the hearing of “a pop”?

ii. How many of these other “witnesses” did you speak with?

iii. Why are these multiple witnesses not included in the report?

8. “This was the first time we **saw** something we couldn’t morally justify, because we knew somebody was already cuffed up, ready to go, taken prisoner and we just witnessed them kill a prisoner,” he (‘Josh’) said.

Page 6 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021 This states that multiple people “saw” an execution.

Why did you publish this claim based on what one person claims he “heard” but did not “see”?

9. “This isn’t like a heat of the moment call where you’re trying to make a decision. It was a very deliberate decision to break the rules of war.” (‘Josh’)

Is this claim also based solely on ‘Josh’ claiming he heard a “pop” on the radio?

10. “I think that was the first thing that happened that didn’t quite sit right with us, where we were like, ‘OK, there’s no excuse, there’s no ambiguity, there’s no going around this one’.” (‘Josh’)

Why was this not reported per the multiple incident reporting options available to ‘Josh’ through the USMC, Australian SOTG, ISAF SOF chain, or direct to NATO ISAF Command?

11. "Josh says he later discussed the incident with his crewmates after returning to Camp Bastion."

i. Why was this not reported per the multiple incident reporting options available to Josh through the USMC, Australian SOTG, ISAF SOF chain, or direct to NATO ISAF Command? –

ii. Where is the testimony from the others who heard the "pop" or "witnessed" the alleged incident?

12. 'Lots of fire and bodies were often left in their wake'

i. This sentence is highlighted in bold in the article.

ii. Does the ABC understand the nature of the counter narcotics direct action counter insurgency operations conducted by the Commando Force Elements within the Australian Special Operations Task Groups, given they included the destruction of Drug labs providing billions of dollars of financial assistance to known insurgent and terrorist organisations around the world and as such were defended by trained and armed fighters?

13. "It was part of a wider joint Australian special forces-US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) campaign targeting illicit drug operations that were financing the Taliban insurgency."

i. Why were members of the US DEA (FAST) element not interviewed in this report?

Page 7 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021 ii. Many of the US DEA FAST members from the 2012 deployment are still in social communications with members of November Platoon - and they have confirmed they were not interviewed by the ABC.

14. Why was the Afghan Security Partner Force, who were on the ground with November Platoon and all Commando Elements on every mission, not interviewed for their account of this story?

Over the course of this last year the members of November Platoon have patiently waited for the truth about this story to be told.

We assumed the national broadcaster would show the responsibility and decency that is required in its charter to report the impossibilities of the statements and circumstances published, and to publish a full, honest correction.

By tarring all members of November Platoon with this terrible brush, the ABC has defamed an entire Platoon Callsign and cast aspersions against all those identifiable within our Special Forces communities, and our families and friends.

Family members and friends have asked questions like, "Did you murder someone dad?", "Why did you shoot him?" and "How could you murder someone like that?" and many, many more.

One of the freedoms we fought for in Afghanistan is the freedom of the press to investigate and report matters in the public interest, a freedom all members of November Platoon support. However, as the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics says of journalists, "*They scrutinise power, but also exercise it, and should be responsible and accountable.*"

A group of November Platoon members has met with legal representatives to pursue legal action against the ABC and the specific journalists responsible for the article, Dan Oaks, Alexandra Blucher and Mark Willacy. However, we were advised that the members participating in the legal action would likely be required to have their identities made public and therefore likely to be published by the ABC and other media.

While we are willing to stand by this call for accountability and accuracy, the real-world risks of being identified carry the potential for horrific impacts upon our families, friends and employment, including the potential threat of being targeted by those extremists who we fought against and who have now returned to power in Afghanistan.

Page 8 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021 We are willing to put ourselves in harm's way, but we cannot put our families and friends in jeopardy, despite the immense damage done by the ABC in publishing this absurd, disgraceful and unsubstantiated slur against our entire Platoon.

A slur made even worse as it was published on the anniversary of the death of one of our own.

The ABC has a responsibility to report in the interest of the Australian public. However, this article was published on the accusations of one non-Australian citizen, without attempting to contact the 40 Australian Veterans it directly impacts.

We call for an independent review of this ABC story. This review can access material to ascertain the truth and may include consulting the Department of Defence, which might provide:

- The recorded radio transmissions

- Confirmation of SOPs

- Mission Summary reporting including numbers of detainees taken off target by November Platoon on all missions

- The authority for taking and handling of Detainees from Helmand Province (Partner Force)

- Confirmation of those on the ground

- Confirmation that November Platoon never actually conducted a mission in Helmand where they took six detainees (not prisoners) off target

- Confirmation that all detainees (not prisoners) taken off target were done so by either the Afghan Special Police Partner Force, or the US DEA

- Confirmation that then Captain Heston Russell was the Platoon Commander, Callsign November Alpha, for every mission into Helmand Province conducted by November Platoon in 2012.

Point of contact:

Heston Russell

(November Platoon Commander October 2010 - December 2012)

Heston.Russell@gmail.com

Page 9 of 10

Letter to the ABC Sent 17 October 2021

References

[1] A. B. D. O. Mark Willacy, "US marine says Australian special forces soldiers made 'deliberate decision to break the rules of war'," ABC, 20 October 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-21/soldiers-killed-man-who-could-not-fit-on-aircraft-say-s-marine/12782756>. [Accessed 2 October 2021].

[2] M. E. a. A. Alliance, "Journalist Code of Ethics," MEAA, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.meaa.org/meaa-media/code-of-ethics/>. [Accessed 2 October 2021].

[3] S. Jackson, "Response to today's story by Jonathon Moran in News Corporation titles," ABC, October 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://about.abc.net.au/correcting-the-record/response-to-jonathon-moran-and-news-corpora-n/>. [Accessed 2 October 2021].

Page 10 of 10

AN INVESTIGATION

181 Days



. The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM)

This is just a continuing update with regards to the progress being made with the submissions on behalf of Defense Force Members, who for no reasons of their own, were not awarded The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM) –

Vic Danko – the following is an extract from the Department of Defence with regards to his support for Ross Gunnell' submission

"Dear Mr Danko

Thank you for your email of 8 October 2021 to the Minister for Defence Personnel, the Hon Andrew Gee MP, concerning the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal for **Mr Ross Gunnell**. Your correspondence has been passed to me for response.

I understand very clearly the selfless service and sacrifice of the extraordinary generation of Australians who served in Vietnam. When our country called on them to serve, our Vietnam Veterans answered and acquitted themselves with distinction.

Minister Gee has received the latest Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal submission. He intends to review and consider it in detail. Minister Gee met with the author of the submission to discuss what has happened with this issue in the past and discuss any available options going forward.

While this consideration by Minister Gee is underway, I encourage anyone who needs support to seek support. Open Arms Veterans and Families Counselling, founded by Vietnam Veterans, provides free and confidential support twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and can be contacted by telephone on 1800 011 046.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and offer my sincere gratitude and that of the Australian Government for your service."

Paul Dickson

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Mail Call...

. **Ian Campbell** – reports in after attending the unveiling of 'The Werribee Gun' –

The Werribee Gun Unveiled

On Sunday 5th December finally, after two previous postponements, the Werribee Gun, a fully restored 12pdr Armstrong rifled breech loader, serial number 370, was finally unveiled at a ceremony held at the Werribee RSL. The 131 Div Loc Bty Association supported the restoration with a donation to the cause.

The day started at 10:30am as the invited guests gathered, proved vaccination status and stood around chatting while awaiting the start of the official ceremony at 11:00am. There were displays of military ephemera to look at, some bringing back memories for me.

The host and MC for the ceremony was Capt. Allan Sterling, JP who is the project manager of the restoration with support from Kevin Browning OAM of 131 Div Loc Bty, and a host of dedicated craftsmen that are detailed on page 52 of the book: The Werribee Gun, written by Allan and Kevin. A number of speeches congratulating these personnel were then delivered.

The gun was unveiled to those gathered as well as the commemorative plaque. Then a ceremonious firing was enacted by members of the Werribee Half Battery in full historical uniform, with the 2 members of the Historical Re-enactment Society of Australia in the uniform of A Bty Victorian Field Artillery providing the Gun Guard. The drill was meticulously carried out including loading, aiming and simulating the discharge of a blank round using a 12G shotgun primer in the mechanical igniter.

Following this we moved into the RSL for lunch and drinks. For those yet to visit Werribee RSL I suggest it well worthwhile. The memorabilia is extensive and beautifully displayed.

I sat at a table with a couple of A Bty chaps, one, John Underwood, had many pictures and memorabilia to show us and he kept the table entertained with his incredible knowledge of RAA history, including his work on restoration projects on a number of other artillery pieces.

My presence representing 131 at the lunch was acknowledged by Capt. Allan Sterling who was a great host for the day. The gun is currently on long term loan to the Werribee Half Battery and will be transported to events as required and is housed in a secure facility in Werribee and is viewable but only by appointment. Contact Allan Sterling by email: werribeehalfbattery@gmail.com

There are exciting plans for the future home of the gun - We will keep you informed.

Lots more pictures are viewable on the Half Battery Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/WerribeeHB>

The book, The Werribee Gun, is available for \$20.00 plus postage by emailing Alan Sterling at the above email address.

Ian Campbell

SVN 1971

THE WERRIBEE GUN

The story of its restoration,
together with the history of the Armstrong RBLs
in Australia and technical details



By Allan Sterling and Kevin Browning

In 1864 the colony of Victoria purchased six of the revolutionary new Armstrong rifled breech loading field guns. Four of those guns survive today. By 1994 three of these four had been restored with gun number 370 remaining unrestored. In 2016 restoration of 370 began.

This book details the five-year restoration by a group of extraordinarily skilled craftsmen using traditional skills and techniques becoming rare today. This book also details the history of the guns and their technical and operational details, information gathered by the authors over many years. As such this book contains a wealth of information on those interested in the Armstrong breech loading guns of the mid 1800s.



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION
(VICTORIA) INCORPORATED



In 1864 the colony of Victoria purchased six of the revolutionary new Armstrong rifled breech loading field guns. Four of those guns survive today. By 1994 three of these four had been restored with gun number 370 remaining unrestored. In 2016 restoration of 370 began.

This book details the five-year restoration by a group of extraordinarily skilled craftsmen using traditional skills and techniques becoming rare today. This book also details the history of the guns and their technical and operational details, information gathered by the authors over many years. As such this book contains a wealth of information on those interested in the Armstrong breech loading guns of the mid 1800s.



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION
(VICTORIA) INCORPORATED



At left and above - the front and back covers of "The Werribee Gun"

. Kevin Browning forwarded the following information in –



150th Anniversary Painting Commission and Prints

Good afternoon from the Head of Regiment Team,

Background

During the Regimental Committee Meeting in Feb 19, the idea of commissioning a painting to mark the 150th Anniversary was discussed. The Committee agreed that the Anniversary should be commemorated with an appropriate historical piece; one that all Gunners, both serving and retired, would inherently recognise and that was clearly emblematic of the Regiment for other observers.

Having initially looked at the work of two potential artists, the commission was offered to the British artist David Rowlands. After discussions with Mr Rowlands, two First World War actions in 1916 were considered:

- 2Lt Samuel Raymond Thurnhill MC and a detachment of 6 Bty, 2 FA Bde at Pozieres on the night of 22/23 July.
- CPL Frank Oswald Matt DCM of the Trench Mortar Battery on the same night at Pozieres.

It was subsequently suggested that the Thurnhill and Matt actions could possibly both be included in the one commission. This was endorsed by the Regimental Committee and agreed to by the artist.

Current Situation

The painting is complete and in transit. Prior to leaving the UK, the painting was professionally photographed prior to a print run. Four hundred prints have been produced of which two hundred have been signed and numbered by the artist. All funds raised from the sale of the prints will go to the RAA (Gunners') Fund.

In conjunction with the RAA History Committee, the artist also drafted a caption that will appear on the prints. The wording is as follows:

The 1st Australian Divisional Artillery at Pozières 22-23 July 1916, during the Battle of the Somme

On the night of 22nd July 1916, under cover of an artillery bombardment, 2nd Lieutenant Samuel Raymond Thurnhill of 6th Battery, 2nd Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Field Artillery, was detailed to take an 18-pounder gun forward on the main Albert-Bapaume road to demolish a German barricade at the village of Pozières, which was to be attacked that night by the infantry of the 1st Australian Division. At 0030hrs, having brought the gun up and silently into action, Thurnhill's detachment engaged the enemy with 115 rounds of highly accurate direct fire, effectively covering the assault in that sector, before withdrawing safely.

Simultaneously, Corporal Frank Oswald Matt of X1A Australian Medium Trench Mortar Battery, 1st Division Trench Mortars, Australian Field Artillery, under terrific fire from the enemy, took his 2-inch trench mortar and detachment forward into No-Man's-Land beside the Pozières road. Corporal Matt kept the mortar in action in direct view of the enemy,

engaging them with effective fire until he was severely wounded and all his men killed. Corporal Matt later died of his wounds.

2nd Lieutenant Thurnhill was awarded the Military Cross; Corporal Matt was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

The intent is for the painting to hang in the RAA Regimental Officers' Mess until transferred permanently to the Museum when it opens at Puckapunyal. The painting will hang together with photos of Lieutenant Thurnhill and Corporal Matt, replicas of their MC and DCM medal groups respectively and a copy of the print caption.

Sale of Prints

Although the *Pozieres 1916* prints will not be available here in Australia until the New Year, orders are now being taken for both the signed and unsigned examples. Prices (excluding postage and packing – which is still TBC) are as follows:

- Signed and numbered prints: \$100 each
- Unsigned prints: \$50 each

All email orders for prints should be sent to the undersigned. (Please note that the prints with the numbers of all current RAA Regiments and Batteries have been reserved, as has number 150)

Below is an image of the print with caption. There is also one without the caption.



The 1st Australian Divisional Artillery at Pozieres, 22-23 July 1916, during the Battle of the Somme

On the night of 22nd July 1916, under cover of an artillery bombardment, 2nd Lieutenant Samuel Raymond Thurnhill of 4th Battery, 2nd Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Field Artillery, was directed to take an 18-pounder gun forward to the enemy. Other batteries had to demolish a German barbed wire in the village of Pozieres, which was to be reached that night by the infantry of the 1st Australian Division. At 10.00pm, having brought the gun up and shelled with action, Thurnhill's detachment engaged the enemy with 112 rounds of high explosive and shrapnel, effectively causing the enemy to retreat. Before withdrawing, Thurnhill's detachment, Corporal Frank Donald Baker of 2nd Australian Machine Gun Brigade, 1st Division, Pozieres, Western Australia, Australian Field Artillery, under cover of the enemy, took his 18-pounder gun and detachment forward into No Man's Land inside the Pozieres road. Corporal Matt kept the machine in action in direct view of the enemy, engaging them with effective fire until he was severely wounded and all his men killed. Corporal Matt later died of his wounds. 2nd Lieutenant Thurnhill was awarded the Military Cross. Corporal Matt was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

973 1722



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...

. John Richmond (Canberra) – "Hi Paul

Had started to do my list of Xmas greetings I was going to write this week.

As you have said November has gone, but now the silly season is almost upon us. I hope we don't have to go back into lock down again, but who can guess what will happen next? Of course, our biggest problem is we are plum in the middle of NSW. In the last week, we have had our 1st two cases of the new variant of the bug. It would seem at this stage it is thanks again to Sydney

Had my 2nd dose of the vaccine and have been told by my doctor I will need my booster in January. She treats me as a special case:

1991 back injury (still keeping me out of action to an extent)

2004 quad heart bi-pass (still on medication and monitoring)

2014 prostate cancer Diagnosis (operation, radiation and now a second course of hormone)

2021 sugar diabetes (medication and diet)

Guess what one of the courses of the heart and to a lesser extent is I was a SMOKER. I am afraid it was an era we lived in and most of my cronies puffed. What fools we were.

With the lockdown has kept us very much at home. My wife in particular would love to go up to QLD and see here sisters and families. Not me. I am a true NSW boy, I would not get a visa to cross the border.

How is big brother Jim these days? I know he was living in the Nation's Capital at one stage.

All the best for the Xmas season and for 2022

John.'

. Michael Quinlan (Sydney) – “Hi Paul.

Sorry not having replied earlier, domestic duties got in the way.

Good to hear you are nearly back to normal. I still can't reconcile the reasons for the stubborn 5% of the eligible population who steadfastly refuse to be immunised.

In the absence of Overseas travel we have busied ourselves with travelling within Australia. We spent five months in our caravan from just after Anzac Day to September, travelling from Sydney to Canberra, then across to Batemans Bay, then heading South along the coast to lakes Entrance (Vic), then across the middle of Victoria to Adelaide then across the Nullarbor ... then, the unthinkable happened exactly half way across the Nullarbor; the turbo in my VW Touareg gave up the ghost. We had to be towed to the nearest VW dealer which was 1250km away at Albany, \$6,900 later we arrived in Albany. There was one turbo in stock in Melbourne so after another \$6,800 and three weeks in Albany, we had the old girl (6 yrs old) repaired. In Albany, one day it was windy, cold and wet and the next wet, windy and cold. Not a place to be in around July. Never the less, we decided to return to NSW via Broken Hill, then straight up to warmer climes in Moree. Border closures stopped us from entering Qld. We arrive back home in early September a little wiser and poorer for our trip away. Subsequently, I have ordered a new VW Touareg and await its delivery. We are looking forward to a big extended family reunion this Christmas and an Anzac Day Reunion in Melbourne? Then off in our van again this time to Qld and NT.

Regards

Michael

Pictures, our tow from Madera to Albany.



And the Great Australian Bight.

. Steve Wynn (Yippin Creek, Wauchope, NSW) – “G'day Paul,

Where to start, a very good mate of mine died yesterday, a fellow HAM and member of my radio club, he was a 'Blue Orchid' (RAAF), but I never held that against him. A young bloke with a young family, had cancer for less than a year, looked as though it was going well too, and suddenly went bad, poor bugger.

Glad to hear your melanoma op was a good one, my last one was not. Golf is all you think about when 'under the knife', mate golf is like fencing, (no not sword fighting) - you dig a hole only to immediately fill it in again, with golf, you hit a ball away from you and go chase it, only to hit it away again, illogical as Spock would say. That will stir the golfers up. We received vouchers from NSW Govt for eating out this year, so we had some very nice feeds for free, I just received an email from NSW Govt with some more free food vouchers, so the Thai and Chinese shops will be getting a visit as soon as I am able to go anywhere.

Mate that is a good temperature to have, I went through a period of 2.5 years of at least once every 4-6 weeks having an inner core body temp of 101-104 degrees C with an infection that no drugs could kill, spent a lot of time in hospital, which can get boring after the first visit, I prefer not to go there anymore, the place is full of sick people, one could catch something.

I had both legs operated on for melanomas around a month ago, the right leg got infected from the operation and I have spent the last month on bloody awful antibiotics and getting dressings changed every few days. Unable to walk for 3 of the last 4 weeks, and they want me to go in for another op to remove another melanoma, no chance. However, I have to keep reminding myself how lucky/blessed I really am when I think of what others are going through though.

My poor wife has had to put up with me, I mean nurse me, for weeks, I am trying to make it last as long as I can but I think she is a wake up to me now.

Yeah mate, time flies when you are having fun, Christmas here again, I thought the Y2K bug was the end of the world too ha, ha. Pretty much the same here in NSW, most places require double vax for entry, including our RSL club, but that is OK, I have had my two shots of Moderna. Masks are still required indoors at some venues, I have not tested a trip to the bank but very tempted to see if I cause the protective screens to be activated when I march in with a mask on lol. You need a generous householder who will allow you to be quarantined with them for the required period after you land back in Oz, just in case. Unfortunately, I am stuck in Oz these days, or is that fortunately, I need so many damn pills to keep me going these days, I would end up with a life sentence for being a drug trafficker if I tried to leave Oz for a trip/holiday.

I did all my shopping online, bought all MY Christmas presents already, the family can buy their own, bah humbug.

Trouble is when you buy your own presents, you know what you are getting.

I decided to put Windows 11 on a PC that MS said could not be done, so far so good, there are numerous ways to accomplish the task but waiting to see if MS takes action during an update, they might ban me from Windows, yippee.

Undecided, if I like W11 or not, it requires some getting used to and being an old horse I don't like change anymore.

Raining a lot here over the last month so there was not much I could have done outside anyway. I did stick a plastic bag over my leg to seal the dressing area, and spent 2 hours in the pouring rain, soaked to the skin, cutting the grass on the ride-on yesterday, I needed to get out of the house, it has been a month stuck inside keeping my dressing clean and dry, alright. Came inside after finishing most of the lawn and just got straight into the shower while leg dressing was 'water proofed'. My wife said why didn't I wear a rain coat, she could have said it's raining don't do it, I did not tell her I did not think of that; besides, it did not rain till I drove the ride on out of the shed, typical eh.

You all take care and have a great Christmas and a spectacular 2022.

Cheers, Steve."

. Peter Pioro (Townsville) – "Paul,

Well we made it through the 15-week lockdown picking up 16 new clients in the process.

The welfare / compensation team put in 677 hours working from home.

Back in the office at RSL & Vietnam Veterans. Two of our team have qualified at Level 1 Welfare Advocate the other Level 1 Compensation Advocate. Makes looking after 126 clients a little better.

As for health, my Lower Back is still an issue needing 2 blockers administered by my neurosurgeon at Prince of Wales Private. Waiting for next stage "corrective" surgery. This will not happen this side of Christmas. My GP removed a skin cancer (4 stitches) just to round things off.

I am going to go on Medicinal Cannabis as allowed by DVA. (Not the yippee stuff)

I will try to do better with my commitment to the "From the Advocates Desk".

Hope 2022 is better health wise and Santa brings what you asked for!!!

Take care and we should catch up on SKYPE again some time.

Regards,

Peter Pioro."

. Ernie Newbold (Sydney) – "G'day Paul,

As we come to the end of another year I trust that you and Helen are doing OK after all that we have had to endure with the Covid virus over the last two years.

I wasn't too keen on the Astra Zeneca treatment option with the risk of blood clots but the Pfizer treatment wasn't available for those in our age group. So, I lined up for the Astra Zeneca doses in due course. Fortunately, there didn't appear to be many reports of blood clots in the news and I didn't have any side effects at all.

The lockdown was much harder to live with, being restricted to not going outside a 5km radius from home for close to two months.

Things are improving now, one of the first things I went for was haircut, I had never looked forward to a haircut so much in my life. The first day I went to get my haircut the BBQ (barbers queue) was about an hour and a half long, so I went back a few days later when it was only about half an hour.

I am still staying away from public transport at this stage but at least I can now drive anywhere within NSW if I want to, so I'll be off to the Riverina region in Southern NSW to visit my sister and her family for Christmas this year.

May I wish you and Helen and all our friends from the 131 network a happy and joyous Christmas and New Year.

Regards,

Ernie."

. Ken Osborne – (Portland, Vic) – "Dear Paul, nothing much to report on over here.

Dictator Dan's new pandemic legislation comes into force on the 15th and it gives him more powers to shut us down if he so feels fit to do so, it was modified a bit but nowhere near what the Law Institute and other bodies asked for. So now it is a wait and see what he does, with lots of people protesting but knowing him he will be putting oil on troubled waters before September when the next state election is due to be held. Nearly all restrictions will be lifted by the middle of the month, but he still has that power to change things overnight.

On the phone is good to keep in contact, but sometimes you only want to discuss some matters without everyone listening in. I wanted to tell her about some health problems my wife is having but it cannot be done if the wife is in earshot as she goes off the planet at times as she considers it is nobody else's business but her own. Women are funny at times! I also have my own problems and will probably have to use a walker soon as my back and legs are really giving me curry. I shuffle around using a stick, have trouble bending over to pick things up and after standing even for a short time find it necessary to sit down and give my back a rest. So, as a consequence I do a lot of reading, getting really

good at the cryptic crossword in the Herald Sun so can occupy my mind if not the body. I am currently sorting out some postcards I bought on line. Got a job lot of 900 or so from all over the world, so now I need to sort them out by country or theme and do some cleaning up as a number were taken out of albums they were obviously pasted into and then I can add them to the 20,000- others I have hanging around the house, but in albums that hold them in pockets instead of glued in.

I also do half the cooking around the house. Neridah does the basic meals, whereas I am into the more exotic and I am prepared to try out new recipes that look good and tasty, not all turn out like the picture in the paper or magazine as I reckon they only half cook the dish sometimes to get a great photo but generally most come up to the taste test OK. This year we are home alone, the kids are spending theirs with other family members in Melbourne, So Neridah and I are going to pig out on oysters and prawns (already ordered), but at my age I don't think the oysters will work on my libido, but I am sure they will still taste nice. So, I hope you have a wonderful Christmas, do not do anything I would not do, keep smiling, regards Ken O."

. Graham Williams (Gold Coast) – "Hi Paul,

Tis the Season, so, top of the Season to Helen and yourself. Life goes on here at the Piggabeen Road Ponderosa. Unlike yourself Christmas shopping is not on the agenda here.... just doesn't happen unless one counts supply of prawns, beer and bourbon. Decorations do not exactly abound either although Jenni has put up a small tree with Christmas lights. Unlike most years when Jenni works nursing at both Christmas and New Year this year she is rostered off so it will be just the 2 of us here at home so a quiet time.

Restrictions here? For the past, few days all one has heard on the TV news is that the border wall will come down in Qld from 1 am tomorrow morning. This isn't exactly ridgey didge. Had a chat with one of the boys in blue last week and was advised the "border barriers" would remain in place until March with police barrier workers' accommodation paid for by the Qld Government up to that time. Hmmm! For what it's worth from 1 am tomorrow all Southerners from outside our border bubble will be able to visit Qld under the following conditions.

They have the appropriate border pass.

Are double vaccinated.

Provide a negative PCR test taken within 72 hrs of arrival.

If staying more than 5 days a further PCR test will be required.

Those unable to provide the above have a choice.... go home or take 14-days hotel quarantine.

Living in Tweed Heads so within the border bubble we only have to provide a different border pass and be double vaccinated so no longer have to provide a letter from one's doctor or hospital to cross the border. There are of course two head-shakers to go along with all that. Firstly, anyone wishing to cross the border from 1 am tomorrow whether within the border bubble or otherwise CANNOT apply for the new passes until midnight tonight.

Last time the Queensland Government pulled that stunt the entire system crashed from sheer numbers of those going online to apply AND if we are lucky enough to have no repeat of that debacle we have also been told to expect up to a 4-hour delay in traffic to get through. Can't wait for that one.

Of course, Queenslanders who travel south will face the same restrictions to get back in so that is the state of play at present. Who knows what changes will come about once Qld Covid numbers increase, as they will is anyone's guess. Like yourself booster shots are now being discussed here with many due already but nothing happening about that so far, at least in Tweed. Also, bringing the booster side of things back from 6 months to 5 months. Can't tell you much about what is happening elsewhere except W.A. will not be opening up until February. (Today's news, fake or otherwise.)

I am still getting out and about to the gym here, doing well on the punt in the Dolphins hotel, and Jenni and myself going out for lunch or dinner as the occasion suits so can't complain. Other than that, it is work around the yard and gardens ... always restful here after that with happy hour listening to music from the 60's and 70's. It's a memories thing Paul.

Anyway, mate that's it from me. Will take this opportunity to wish yourself and Helen a very Happy Christmas and for all of us hopefully a better New Year than those past. Have fun, stay safe.

Cheers,

Graham Williams."

"P.S. ... Bloody amazing...drove across border this morning with a queue of only 3 cars in front of me. Cross fingers it lasts this way though I won't hold my breath.

Ya'll take care there now."

. John Vitkovsky (Rocklands Reservoir, near Balmoral, Victoria) – "Hi Paul,

Nothing has changed much here. Melbourne Covid restrictions have been lifted and we have been taking bookings only for double vaccinated clients with proof of where they live.

Since, 3 weeks ago, we blocked out our Airbnb calendar and have been away camping and fishing in our caravan with Ian and his wife (ex Infantry, Vietnam, 1968, the only other Vietnam vet in our area). Murray River at Robinvale up about 7 feet from last year, strong flow and brown. Surprisingly, we caught more fish than we had for years - Cod, Yellow Belly, Silver Perch, Redfin and a Catfish. Then just spent a week camping on Rocklands Reservoir about 5kms from our place, with meagre fishing results, but having fun and a few cool drinks. See pics.

No luck yet selling the Resort. Getting many enquiries from Melburnians who are wanting to escape the big city with its lockdowns and protest marches. However, the banks want much more equity for a commercial enterprise than a domestic dwelling. In other words, lots of dreamers with little cash. So, we have put it on the back burner until after Christmas. With some luck, we may be able to get into South Australia and catch up with my kids (! Err... 46 and 44 years old?) and grandkids who we have not seen for more than a year.

Other than that, still interested in my cars. Last week went to the Ararat Hill Climbs, which was fun. My highlight (being a Beemer fan), was a 23-year-old BMW M3 beating a 911 Porsche up the hill by 3.5 seconds. Have bought a BMW X5 4.0D twin turbo 3 litre diesel SAV and remapped the ECU to 275Kw/700Nm. 8 speed ZF gearbox with flappy paddles. Really gets moving and just over 7 litres/100 at cruising speeds... double the horsepower and half the fuel consumption from my old Range Rover V8.

Health is good (touch wood) and off medications from my prostatectomy and heart attack. Walking most mornings and working out on the weight machine, trying to stay in shape. Getting harder...

Anyway, I hope you have a good Christmas.

Regards, John."



. Rieny Nieuwenhof (Portarlinton, Vic) - "Paul,

Thanks for your catch-up (6 Dec.) Seeing and hearing you via ZOOM makes it feels like we have been in communication on a regular basis. Those 131 meetings are enjoyable and sometimes informative.

Christmas shopping is almost done and dusted, lucky my wife started at the beginning of 2021! Life on the Bellarine is fairly uneventful, it is a retiree's haven after all.

People are discovering Portarlinton now that it is connected to Melbourne via ferries and many are leaving the city for a calmer coastal lifestyle. This has had a dramatic impact on land and house prices, a nearby house block sold for \$727,000 recently. My wife and I are due for our booster shot just before Christmas, but I reckon we will need a booster each year from now on. Even though masks are no longer mandatory we will continue to wear them in crowded places and like you take common sense precautions at the supermarket.

After a long struggle, I have been approved for EDA (Extreme Disability Adjustment) which means my pension goes up and in the event of my passing my wife gets the Gold Card. I have been diagnosed with lung disease and have to use a 'puffer' daily. Despite this I still go to the gym at least twice a week and stay active at home (gardening, cutting grass, washing the cars etc.)

The Geelong Vietnam Veterans Association has a growing list of sick members, seems our age cohort is becoming more fragile as time passes.

Thank you for your continued dedication to producing the *E & E's* newsletter. I have attached our newsletter "The Slouch Hat" which I edit four times a year. The end of the year is closing in fast and we look forward to a better 2022. I wish you and yours a very Happy New Year. Regards, Rieny."

Ed – Do yourself a favour and click on the flowing link and got to and read “The Slouch Hat” newsletter -

Website: <https://geelongvietnamvets.com>

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.

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

This isn't "coming up" – it's here...

yourname@bigpond.com ... this email address @bigpond is causing problems in being received by those of you who use bigpond.

Ed – I'm getting about 24 "unable to receive" messages for the last two general emails that I've sent out, including the last *Eyes & Ears*.

The response received:

"Address not found"

Your message wasn't delivered to **yourname@bigpond.com** because the address couldn't be found or is unable to receive email."

I have been advised it's the "bigpond.com" component that is causing the trouble. **Bob Billiards** has advised me that another association he's involved in has had the same problems.

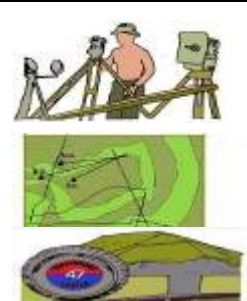
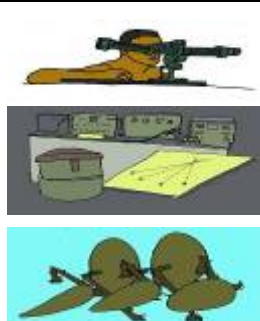
So, those of you who have ".....@bigpond.com" as your email server may want to check your "Junk/Spam" emails and have a go at correcting the problem.

I hope you can rectify the problem.

Paul

email: 131eyesandears@gmail.com

NB: "yourname" is a substitute for your actual first part of your email name.



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>

A few well chosen words of wisdom from the Sec/Treas – **“HAPPY NEW YEAR”** – I look forward to hearing from you all in 2022.

Grahame Email sectreas131locators@gmail.com

Presidential perambulations

December has been a technology month for me, but not in a positive way. I remember my first computer challenge at what is now known as RMIT University. Making sure the punch cards were processed correctly and Fortran set to work. Mmm, not the best outcome.

My first owned computer was a Commodore 64 with a tape for recording. Over time I progressed in capability and quality, always sticking to Windows rather than Apple. Based on a number of iterations I liked Windows 7 the best. My software choice initially was Word Perfect which just disappeared into the aether somehow, somewhere.

Last year my Asus hard drive died and I invested in a Lenovo laptop with good SSD capacity. My prejudice was that because Lenovo bought out IBM computers it should be OK. However, the MS software posed some problems, which eventually I managed to fix. Next choice was Gmail as my email program, but again I wasn't totally happy with that. The Optus emails worked on my phone and tablet which helped, although that confused me.

Next step was to buy Outlook, which I was very familiar with when using Windows 7. The Lenovo laptop had the unusual keyboard characteristics of when I hit @ it came up as “and vice versa; whilst # delivered a UK pound symbol. And the new Outlook was variable with my emails. So, I went to the Microsoft Store – sorry MS Experience Centre – in Sydney. It took a team of three to sort the keyboard out. Then they worked on the email issue. All done I was assured, although now the emails arrive in the inbox then disappear. I've tried suggested remedies without success. Hence it will be back to the Experience Centre for an additional experience in the new year.

Anyone out there who has a quill and ink available, please contact me.

My best wishes to all of our readers for a successful, healthy 2022, which, computers apart, surely have to be better than 2021.

Allen Morley



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

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: **Tuesday, 8th February, 2022** at 1100hrs

Venue: To be advised and availability on ZOOM to be advised.

ZOOM MEETING: Date: Tuesday, 14th December, 2021 at 1105hrs...

. **Pertinent Points** – extracted from the meeting ...

Attendees were:

Paul Dickson, Ian Kennedy, Bob Billiards, Ernie Newbold

Grahame Dignam, Allen Morley, Terry Erbs, Bert Blink

Warwick Brooker, Merv Nairn, Steve Wynn, Kevin Browning

Ron Mason, Rieny Nieuwenhof, Barry Guzder



Apologies: Gordon Malcolm, Ian Amos, Nick Proskurin, George Lane, other State Reps and Jim Fitzgerald.

Financial Membership is currently ...**127**, plus Associates **2**, Affiliates **15**. Total **144**.

Lapsed **36** members as at 1/12/2021.

Presidents report.

Allen reported:

- . The Royal Commission into Vet suicide has begun in QLD.
- . Related an item from Bill Taggart, our US contact 1/83rd Bty US Arty who reported **"Bomb squad called to ER after a patient turned up with a WWII artillery shell lodged in his rectum, police say. The end result was the item was removed and destroyed in a controlled manner."**
- . Wished all Locators a Merry Christmas and happy New Year until we meet in person once again.

Public Officer Report.

The Public Officer reported that he had submitted our Annual Report required by Fair Trading and the fee of \$48 was paid.

Webmaster Update.

Bob advised the number of face book members was now 252 and that most access to the Newsletter was via Face book. Activity was moderate and more posters are required.

Health Report.

- . Steve Wynn had confirmed that he continues his treatment for melanomas which required frequent Doctor Treatments. He is coping with it all.
- . No new advices have been received at this time.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

- . Kevin Browning remarked on the unveiling of the 12 Pounder gun at Werribee Vic. Ian Campbell was able to attend and an item will appear in the Dec 2021 Eyes & Ears issue. Kevin also mentioned the availability of a Print depicting a scene from Pozieres. See *Eyes & Ears* for more details.
- . Rieny advised the Korean Hanwa company will build Self-propelled Howitzers in Geelong for the Australian Army in a major plus for our army and the local economy.
- . Terry Erbs mentioned that the proposed April 2022 Reunion has not received any reply or support from the RSL or DVA. more information to come

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

. Birthdays in the Battery...January –

DATE	NAME	REGT NO	SVN IN	SVN OUT	COMMENTS
1	VICTOR DANKO	2783210	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
1	JOE LIBRIZZI	5716081	23 09 1969	04 06 1970	
1	CHRIS CHAPPLE	5716208	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	
1	RICHARD CHAPLIN	2791166	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	
2	JOHN BROWNE	218367	27 08 1969	13 08 1970	
2	KEVIN "KJ" SALTER Cpt	51470	N/A	02 01 1938	† 25.03.2020
3	GARY NAVAS	2793162	30 05 1970	26 05 1971	
4	PETER PETTIFORD	3792038	08 11 1968	04 06 1969	
5	GRAEME SMITH	6708707	12 04 1968	20 08 1968	
6	ARTHUR DOVE	217348	13 01 1969	28 11 1969	
6	ALLAN ROBOTHAM	6709864	25 05 1971	18 11 1971	
9	PETER SADLER	15138	20 05 1966	28 04 1967	† 2008
9	ROBERT NESS	4717755	20 05 1966	30 04 1967	
9	(GERARD) DAVID PIRES	5717069	03 03 1971	12 08 1971	
11	PAUL TRAVERS Maj.	47027	{09 09 1965	19 09 1965	† 18.02.1990
	" "		{25 02 1967	04 04 1967	RAEME
11	GRAEME LESLIE	1861 4	1969	1970	† Unknown
11	PETER PIORO	2790931	27 11 1969	04 05 1970	
12	PETER HOPPER Sgt	3787938	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
12	DAVID REILLY	3794901	24 03 1970	13 08 1970	
12	BRIAN JOHNSON	4720991	29 05 1970	05 05 1971	† 31.01.2012
	" "		14 05 1970	27 05 1970	AACC/1 Arm Reg/Det 131
12	LASZLO FALKAI	4721836	03 03 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "		30 06 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd REGT.
13	K ROJE REMY (R HOLMES)	3795910	22 07 1970	25 02 1971	

15	GEORGE STAZIKER Lt Col	2108436	14 04 71	01 05 71	† 29.12.12
15	PHIL. ENDICOTT	2783419	06 01 1967	27 09 1967	
16	KEN OSBORNE WO1	48543	18 04 67	02 04 68	RAEME
16	EDWARD COOPER	44231	26 08 1969	21 01 1970	
16	MELVYN TUCK	221973		1973 PNG	Survey
16	LESLIE SAURINE WO2	2791863	24 03 1970	17 12 1970	
18	PETER SZABO	38752	26 03 1969	25 03 1970	† 07.12.07
19	BARRY HEARD	3788324	02 04 1967	25 10 1967	Honorary 131
19	PETER FIELDEN	3797872	25 11 1970	12 08 1971	
21	PETER SUCKLING SGT	55141	05.02.1971	15.11.1971	
22	KEVIN BROWNING Sgt	217743	16 09 1968	24 09 1969	131
	" "		05 04 1971	29 06 1971	131
	" "		30 06 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd REGT.
22	MICHAEL BARLOW	2792252	19 08 1970	11 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
23	DONALD CHALMERS	3793171	01 07 1969	03 12 1969	
	IAN "Scotty" McNICOL	216327	{12 09 1967	17 09 1968	131
	" "		{09 04 1970	02 05 1970	VISIT
24	TERENCE ERBS	3791713	28 10 1968	04 06 1969	
24	DAVID NEGUS	3794728	24 02 1970	13 08 1970	
25	WALLY FRANKLIN	1411285	29 01 1968	28 01 1969	
26	RAY HUTCHINSON	37669	17 04 1967	02 04 1968	
26	GEOFFREY TODD	54254	18 12 1967	10 12 1968	† 2012
27	WADE COOPER	5805611/8216682	IRAQ/E.TIMOR/AFGHANISTAN		20STA
27	ALLAN ADAMS	3788792	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	
28	ROBIN TORRISI	1735572	20 08 1970	12 03 1971	
29	PETER MACKIE	2184557	20 08 1970	08 02 1971	
30	ALAN McDONALD	511355	05 12 1967	03 12 1968	
31	COLIN GORDON	16975	15 03 1968	26 03 1969	† 28.03.10

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

Ed – 6 blokes not highlighted is not that bad, but still we could do a little more work on it!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 171 and we've sent out 171. Ed – There's a heap of contenders out there. And, on a more sombre note, having archived Locator Profiles does allow for family, friends and Co-Locators to become more aware of the Members's whose Vale notice appears in a publication of *Eyes & Ears*.

. **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

	Name: Smith, Denis William		
	Service No: 2789286 Rank: Gunner		
	SVN In: 16 04 1969 SVN Out: 17 12 1969		
	DoB: 01 11 1946 DoD: 13 12 2021		
	Lest We Forget		

. Denis William Smith – Denis’s wife, Cathie, advised us of his passing...

“Dear Paul

Sad news...my husband, Denis, passed away peacefully on 13th December 2021 after a 2-year brain cancer journey.

He always enjoyed reading the *Eyes and Ears* and catching up on news.

I will try to send more information later as at the moment there is a lot to organise.

Best wishes

Cathie Smith”



Locator Profile

Surname: Smith **Given Names:** Denis William **DOB:** 01.11.46 **State of Origin:** NSW

What did you do before the army: I was an apprentice Toolmaker at Lanes Hardware

Service dates from: 7/2/68 **to:** 6/2/70 **Recruit training centre:** Singleton

Intake No.: 11th. **Regimental No:** 2789286

Dates in Nui Dat from: 15.04.69 **to:** 17.12.69

What was your location/s in Nui Dat: Orderly room - Admin Clerk & Pay Rep.

Who were you there with: **Orderly Room –** OC: Capt. Eaton & Capt. Kennedy, BSM: W02 Cleasby & W02 Macaulay Bdr. John Chilton.

I shared the tent with Bdr. Pierre Goss, Bdr. John Smith who was replaced by Bdr. Mick Aurich. I knew all personnel in Survey, Radar & LP's as I made out the pays and sorted the mail during Apr 69 to Dec 69.

What was your last rank: Gunner.

What did you do after the army: When I was de-mobbed was I went to Lysaghts and applied for a toolmaking job I was offered a position as a clerks or toolmaking, I took the toolmaking position at Sankey part of Lysaghts. I worked there for about a year then went to WA few weeks holiday. I then went to Newbold's Refectories making Furnace brick dies. I then started at John Pelps Engineering as a precision machinist. After a couple years, I went to Fin Aluminium as Engineer Toolmaker. After about 10 years I move to Fin Glass the commercial side. I was able to win approval to manufacture NSW. PWD windows and become the PWD Co Coordinator. I had to set up the factory with presses & machinery to manufacture these windows. The company produced Aluminium Windows & Doors for many Schools, Police Station, Courthouse & Hospitals. The largest contract was the Newcastle John Hunter Hospital.

After that I was approached by a couple of Window manufacturers to set up my own Toolmaking business in 1990 we started Design Tooling. We designed Pneumatic & Hydraulic presses with tooling as well as special purchase machines for the window industry. In November 2011, we retired.

Anything else of interest: We have a few acres at Upper Chichester which we visit most fortnights for a few days. I try to play Golf on Thursdays at the Toronto country club
I go fishing in Lake Macquarie if I can find time. We also like travelling.

What city / town do you live in now: I live at Fishing Point at Lake Macquarie.

Jeff Schafer – “Hi Paul,

Denis was part of the National Service 11th Intake, Newcastle dwellers that did their recruit training together at Singleton. I recall he worked in the Det 131 Orderly Room in Nui Dat and looked after our pay book entries between April and December, 1969.

Cheers,

Jeff Schafer.”

George Clark – “Paul, I was much saddened to learn of Denis's passing.

We served together on the Horseshoe in 1969, and he was a great team member and also a good mate. Like most of the vets who served I lost contact with nearly all the blokes with whom I served.

Could you please pass on my sincerest condolences to Cathie and her family, and my thoughts and best wishes are with her. George Clark."

Not sure of the bloke on the left, but that's me in the middle and Denis is on the right at the Horseshoe in 1969.



. David Doyle Vale memories of Jack Heyes -

"I was sorry to hear about the death of Jack Heyes. Being in survey in '68 we spent a lot of time together and often worked as a pair.

I have attached a couple of photos and if appropriate and you don't have any better ones would like to see the one of him at FSB Concorde placed in next month's issue.

Also, if you have details perhaps forwarding copies to Ann his wife might be appropriate and with my appreciation for the time I was able to spend with Jack.

Regards
David"



Jack at
FSB Concorde

Kevin Bush, Geoff
Holden and Jack



Jack and Geoff Holden

Jack, Smithy and Gary Bester



May They Rest in Peace and Their Memories Remain with Us.

For more Vale comments see the Associations Facebook page.



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...

. 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
--

All material that is included in Eyes and Ears, official Newsletter of the 131 Locators Association Inc remains the property of 131 Locators Association for its sole use. Prior written authorisation for the use of any material whatsoever contained in the Newsletter must be sought from 131 Locators Association Inc. Any material approved for use by third parties must acknowledge 131 Locators Association Inc as the source. No responsibility is accepted for unsolicited manuscripts, illustrations or photographs, or for the accuracy of information contained in the text of Eyes and Ears.