

THE EYES and EARS

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

Editor: Paul 'Dicko' Dickson email: 131eyesandears@gmail.com Vol 15 No 12 December 2022 No 173
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

2022 – 56 Years and the Detachment 131 Spirit Lives On: 1966 – 1971



DET.131 DIV LOC BTY NOTICE BOARD

Best wishes for a
Happy New Year
2022
2023

**We now take “One small
step...” – let’s keep doing it
together...**

Art work: Ernie Newbold



RTA'ers 12th December, 1967...

Left to right - Peter Hopper, Ken McNamara (Late), Des Spencer, Brian Hackett, Tony Goldsmith, Leigh Hemming (Late), Paul Dickson and Vic Danko

RTA Project for 2022

We continue on with the project commenced in January this year.

Here's a list of the RTA'ers that I have for our FINAL month Decembers -

1966 – Allan Campbell (Late), Roy Clausen, George Lane, Edward Chase, Des Spencer, Sytse Elzinga, Helmut Lempa (Late), Norman Bullen, Ian Board, David Doyle, Graham O'Toole, Donald Simmons (Late), Fred Lennon (Late)

1967 – Vic Danko, Peter Hopper, Mick Habben, Geoff Wood (Late), Greg Green, Frank Halliday, Roger Long (Late), Keith White, Brian Hackett, Bob Bruce, Barry Nugent, Frank Ipsa, John Blake, Ken McNamara (Late), Leigh Hemming (Late), Paul Dickson, Michael Campbell (Late), Peter Fletcher, Thomas King, Anthony Goldsmith, Chris Bouilly

1968 – Geoffrey Todd (Late), Alan McDonald, Laurie Gallop, John Heyes, Keith Ayliffe, Gary Bester, Victor Claxton (Late), James Lawler (Late), Michael Bohl (Late), Clive Dreis

1969 – Don Chalmers, John Chilton, Brian Smythe, Alan Cleasby, Denis Smith, Terrence Hayes (Late), Jeffrey Schafer, Michael Ferris, Robert Holdsworth

1970 - Leslie Saurine, Garry Smith (Late), Laurence Mion, Peter Colman, Stuart Telford, Charles O'Neill, Vito Ciccolella, Peter Joscelyne, William Slape (Late), Wilhelmus van Zetten

1971 – Frederick Marwick, Stuart Philipson, Norman Jones, Kevin Geoghegan

That's not only Decembers' group complete, but that ends the series.

Ed – Please pardon my indulgence, but I wrote the following some time ago and just thought I'd add it at the end of the RTA'ers section – **A Return...**

*I was drafted at a young twenty years of age
When it happened, my life turned a page
The training and orders were something very new
My journey to Vietnam was a complete change of view*

*I survived and came home to an altered land
Nowhere did I hear a cheer, or the clap of a hand
My life then turned another page
And with deep hidden feelings I went to the back stage*

*It took many a year for me and my mates
To be able to emerge from behind those gates
Which confined us to a dark part of history
And when the welcome was awarded, so unwound a lot of the mystery*

*I stand before you today fifty odd years after the event
Wondering how it happened and wondering why I was sent
But now I'm older and more content
Amongst loved ones, friends and other Vets to share this lasting moment.*

Paul Dickson
1732012



Give me a Name?

The “Lost Locator Project”

This Project is being re-ignited for 2022.

Our current list contains the names of **117** Locators (as at 01.01.22) that we have not had contact with since basically commencing communications in 2012, so, we thought this year is as good as any to try and reduce this number.

However, this doesn't mean that we still have contact with the total number of Battery/Detachment members we have Located over time as continuing correspondence has lapsed in a lot of cases.

We regularly check bereavement/funeral notices and this does not locate members in the way we really want to. So, we're appealing for YOUR help in scouring all sorts of sources – local RSL's may not a good starter.

I can send you the total list of names or, if you prefer, by years in SVN to give you a starting point. I will keep an update and publish monthly results in *Eyes & Ears* and the Associations Facebook page and on the web site.

Paul Dickson

Get in touch with me 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 –

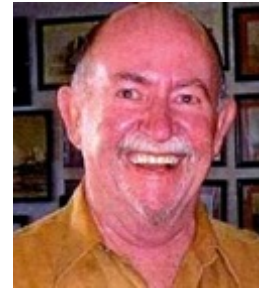
Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

Ed – The following is a continuation of a series, commenced in June's *Eyes & Ears*, taken from an unfinished book by Jeff Evans. Jeff gave the contents to Kevin Browning and he has made it available for us to publish in *Eyes & Ears* and to be archived on the Association's website.

NB – Please note that the contents are Jeff's words and have not been edited/alterd. You will see his “notes” and markings (eg. xxxxxxxxxxxxxx etc) needing further attention by him and so on. Please accept the fact that Jeff was fastidious in his research and still had so much information to follow up on, which included research of documents and interviews with fellow Gunners.

"Gunners in Vietnam, 1965-1971"

aka by Jeff initially as –
"the book"



By Jeff Evans

Edited by Paul Dickson
in conjunction with Kevin Browning,

Chapter 13 Lessons Learned

"The figure that best sums up the artillery's contribution is one that can never be known; the number of Australians – members of the infantry, armoured corps personnel and engineers among others – whose lives were saved on operations because of artillery support."

"The last artillerymen, the 104th Bty (sic), left Vietnam in December 1971. Fourteen gunners lost their lives during the war, among them three forward observers serving with infantry companies."¹

"The Vietnam war placed the gunners under different stresses. While they did not have to endure the relentless enemy bombardment of the First World War, or the air attacks of the Second World War, they were in close proximity to the enemy for longer periods. For the whole time, they were deployed in fire support bases the gunners faced the possibility of enemy rocket or mortar attack, enemy infiltration at night, or sniper fire. Even back in Nui Dat they were not completely immune from this threat and had to man the guns as well as the unit machine-guns.

Each battery was required to remain in action for long periods, on call 24 hours a day. As one gunner has observed, the only time the guns were out of action was when they were 'on the move under a Chinook'... This put great strain on the gunners. The normal detachment was seven men, but at any time some of them might be absent on leave, or from sickness or injury, and yet the guns had to be always ready for action. At one stage the Commanding Officer of the 12th Field regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly, tried unsuccessfully to have the gun detachment strengths increased to twelve so that all necessary tasks could be undertaken. The year of operations in Vietnam was a strenuous and physical effort for the gunners." **DH p489/490**

2LT Birse and Fragging

"Perhaps it was these stresses, when linked to the fact that there was no clear purpose to the war, and alcohol was available at Nui Dat, which led to a number of unfortunate incidents in the Task Force base. Although not confined to the artillery, one most regrettable incident took place in December 1967 when Second Lieutenant Robert Birse of the 4th Field Regiment was killed by a grenade. An Australian gunner was charged with his murder, convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to five years jail and dishonourable discharge, but the sentence was quashed on appeal." **DH p490**

"The first of three Australian 'fraggings' was said to have occurred at this time, an extreme example of the strain on some young men. At 8 p.m. on 10 December, at a remote fire support base near the Nui Thi Vai Mountains, Gunner Leonard Newman allegedly tossed a grenade into the sleeping pit of Lieutenant Robert Birse, of 106 Battery. As he lay dying, Birse groaned that a grenade from Newman's bunker had caused his mortal wounds.

Earlier, Newman, a national serviceman, had shown signs of severe mental instability, which excessive quantities of beer failed to ameliorate. The day before, Birse had reprimanded him for buying beer outside the base and drinking it inside. Newman also felt bitter about being denied leave to visit his wife and new baby. 'I am going to give Birse a scare and throw a grenade in his tent', he told fellow soldiers on the night of the attack. 'It will blow his tent and gear to the shit-house but it won't hurt him'. Newman's conviction and five-year sentence for manslaughter were later quashed on appeal due to the lack of evidence. The military authorities construed a symptom of Newman's behaviour – excessive drinking – as the cause of the tragedy, and cracked down on off-duty drinking, a measure that further reduced morale." **PH p339**

(Letter to the Editor of the RAA Liaison Letter from Kevin Salter.)

Dear Terry

Many, many thanks for the Spring Edition 2005 of the Liaison Letter. If you did not send it then thanks for organising that I get a copy. It makes a great read and helps one to keep up with what is happening within the greatest Corps in the Australian Army.

...

I had a lot of trouble with a young Gunner. He was National Service and did not want to go to South Vietnam. He had psych problems in my opinion and was far from a good soldier. I tried to sort him out with long talks but to no avail.

I approached the Battery Sergeant Major with the problem who said discuss it with the Battery Commander. The answer that came back was 'we need every soldier, we all were going to South Vietnam in 1967'.

I by-passed the Battery Sergeant Major and went to the Regimental Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer Class One Dave Gilday for advice, I told him I had bad vibes about this Gunner. The Regimental Sergeant Major told me I had done everything I could do, had gone through the correct channels and it was the Battery Commanders decision. Sadly, I was right and this Gunner was the one that killed Lieutenant Birse in 1967 with a grenade.

Probably at about half strength, the Battery went on Christmas leave in December. I did not go on leave in 1966/1967, I was acting Regimental Sergeant Major over the leave period. I went to 1 Camp Hospital at Yeronga on the 19th January 1967 for an abdomen X-ray (had been ill for several days) and collapsed during the X-ray, I had a bleeding stomach ulcer. I was discharged from hospital on 14th February 1967, medically downgraded and moved from Battery Guide 106 Battery to Battery Guide 105 Battery. 105 Battery was in the throes of trying to reform after having returned from South Vietnam in September 1966 and most of its South Vietnam tour members had been posted.

Sadly, I waved goodbye to 106 Battery in April 1967 as it moved to South Vietnam. As a regular soldier, I was very disappointed to not be going with the unit that I had joined from scratch.

...

Will sign off.

Again, many thanks for thinking of me with the Liaison Letter.

Regards

Kevin Salter

Fire Support

"Every effort was made to ensure that artillery support was available to all patrols." SAS were excluded from this approach -??? True or False???

The last line of the book ...

Harry Smith, when asked in 1984 what single factor had the greatest effect on the outcome of the Battle of Long Tan, replied with one word, "Artillery". (BLT p165)

From 1968 onwards, public opinion in both the US and Australia was turning against the war. Moratorium marches saw tens of thousands in Australia and hundreds of thousands in the US, march on government buildings and offices to protest the war. The Tet offensive, the very unpopular National Service scheme, the rising death toll all impacted public opinion; politicians joined the marches.

"At its peak strength in 1969, the Australian Army in Vietnam totalled more than 7.000 personnel. Over the ten years of the war, more than 50,000 Army, Air Force and Navy personnel served in Vietnam." (Article from Internet – where?)

"For the Australian Army, the withdrawal from Vietnam represented the end of 33 years of continuous operational duties, which had commenced with World War II, continued through the occupation of Japan, the Korean war, the Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation to the Second Indo-China War in Vietnam." (Article from Internet – where?)

¹ <http://vietnam-war.Commemoration.gov.au/artillery/index> Artillery Overview, accessed 13 July 2011

Chapter 14

Additional recollections...

Don Simmons - From: Don Simmons <donanco@terriganet.net.au>

To: Keith Ayliffe <keithayl@aceconnect.com.au>

Subject: Locators' Book

Date: Wednesday, April 28, 1999 9:01 AM

"Dear Keith,

great to see you at the reunion last weekend at Coffs. I was interested in your efforts to tell the history of the us wonderful people, the Locators.

As I mentioned at the time, you may be interested in a little bit of personal detail.

I joined 131 on my return from Malaya in 1964. I had spent the major part of my military career in the gun batteries. I joined 102 Fd Bty in 1959 and from there to 105 Fd Bty. We went to Wacol, Qld and founded 103 Fd Bty, which of course later took me to Malay. I was always employed as a Command Post Operator, known as a TARA (Technical Assistant Royal Artillery). During my years as a TARA I learnt a lot about where to position a gun battery (this proved important as I will soon tell).

On joining 131 in 1964 I took over Alpha Radar as Radar Commander (No 1). As a result, I was the first to command Alpha Radar in Vietnam, having arrived on the HMAS Sydney as the advance party. We moved up to Nui Dat on the 6th June. The night before Nui Dat was cleared by the US 173 Airborne Regiment.

As it was virgin jungle we had no water other than what we carried in our bottles. When a water trailer did arrive about two months later, we were sick of showering only when it rained. Remember at this time there were no roads, huts or anything that you could call civilised. I gave Les Frost and Brian Turner were given the task of erecting a field shower from a suitable tree. That part was easy, except they nearly had a gun fight to see who was to have the first shower; we all nearly got shot.

Anyway, after a while we came off field rations and had hot meals from the kitchen, we even were issued tents, a welcomed change from our hutchies. As time went on, the radars were a lot of trouble as the high-speed servos were always on the blink as they could not stand the heat of the day and my RAEME Sgt Ted Fields could do little to help as no parts were available.

On one occasion with the servos out of action and unable to move the antenna, and the computer on the blink we were all but useless. But because of my gunnery experience I did a map recon and asked myself, If I were a mortar commander where would I place my mortars. Having decided where that would be, I manually turned my radar to bear on 2730 mils and looked in at that bearing. The next part of the problem was, if we did see a mortar in the air on the screen and with the computer out of action; so, what. Anyway, as it happened, we did. The screen gave us a range to the lift off point and from the bearing 2730 mils and the range I computed bearing and range to target using my slide rule (a piece of equipment long out of service) but a tool that I was handy with being an old gunner.

With a grid reference of a Loc Rep in hand, I phoned the guns (103 Bty, my old mates) and gave them a stand-by bearing and at the same time radioed Arty Tac with my Loc Rep. The regiment were given counter battery gun orders and fired at my Loc Rep and we got the bad guys on the ground.

The next day my site was filled with all manner of high brass, both Aussie and US as it was recorded as the first enemy location in twenty years. When all the fuss was over and all the pats on the back were finished, I had my bum kicked for using unauthorised procedure by alerting the guns to come to a stand-by bearing, even though it saved minutes and made possible the successful hit. Anyway, Good show Alpha, one to the good guys.

On returning to Aust I was sent to the Bureau of Meteorology in Melbourne with five others, Jeff Jebb, Norm MacManus, Mike Richards, Karl Doehrmann, Shorty Gow, and myself Don Simmons. We returned to the S of A where I was posted to Development Wing. I co-authored the Met manuals among many others and personally wrote the first ANKPQ-1 Radar manual using the US tech manuals as a guide.

Thats enough for now, if I can help further, please ask. My call-sign is; donanco@terrigan.net.au

Regards Don

(Ex 212769 WOII Don Simmons) “

The book continues next month, January, 2023 with...

Armour Article – extra comments (the Armour is mention earlier) ...

Article in Armour on Binh Ba. During this battle, the VC fired three rockets at Nui Dat from an area just north of the Binh Ba Rubber. Precisely 60 minutes later another three were fired. They were all located by sound ranging. A remarkable film being recorded on each occasion. Rather than being a blip for when a gun went off the provided a continuous break on the film as the rocket noise was recorded. At the time, and I still believe, I thought they were fired electronically and to try and divert troops from the battle so the VC could escape.

Comments made by Kevin Browning

The Journal of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps Association (NSW Branch) Inc Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington NSW 2021. web-site: www.black-berets.asn.au email: raacansw@defence.gov.au, tel: 9339 3209, fax: 9339 2764 abn 49 709 547 198

ARMOUR

ESTABLISHED 1946 Patron: Major General K W Latchford AO

September 2009 issue no. 457 President Col John Haynes OAM, Editor: Ron Baikie

The Battle of Binh Ba...

As the series continues, you are invited to submit your own recollections and as Kevin mentioned to me there is a bit of a lack of information as to activity in Artillery Tactical HQ (Arty Tac), so efforts of recollections there is more than welcome.

Also, please feel free to submit to me any factual errors you detect.

Paul Dickson: 131eyesandears@gmail.com

. Ken Osborne – ‘TET EVENING TRACERS’...

“Dear Paul, I still have to find and scan the slides over the sky over Long Binh at the time of Tet, however I have added photos of some of the tracers fired by our mob seen from outside my tent looking towards Bravo Radar.



Also, two photos taken at Baria opposite the laundry we used to take our sheets and greens to get laundered, the first shows quite a neat little Vietnamese dwelling before Tet and the second is the scene from roughly the same after Tet. Have slides of the theatre taken after Tet showing it pocked marked by bullet holes and damage done by rockets, So long ago for us. So, keep well regards Ken O.”



AN INVESTIGATION 181 Days

. The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM)



We wait patiently for possible Government advice on progress for continuing updates 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).

This matter has NOT concluded by any means – catch you ALL next year.

Paul Dickson

“Nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

Mail Call...

. Ken Osborne – “Dear Paul, the article on Tet and Fire Support Base Coral was a great read, I was there when the first Tet saga began, but had left for home when the big daddy battle was on. I know they fired a lot of ammo, even from Nui Dat the sky was lit up from Hoa Long towards Saigon, such that it was almost as bright as day. I think I have one or two slides showing the tracers lighting up the sky and from Spooky firing around the oval at Hoa Long at Tet. I will have to dig them out and scan them for you at some stage. Just have to get my tower fixed as it has a glitch in it at present. I did not hear about the damage done to the radars during the second wave but was probably still on leave when that happened. It goes to show me that not many people had much faith in the ANKPQ1's, even when I was there they discounted the radars sightings unless they had it confirmed by a visual sighting as well, so much for technology. Any how will try and pen a few words in the near future, so in the meantime keep well. Regards, Ken Osborne.”

. Peter Binns – a great heads up!
“Hi Paul
Still got it 75
Keeping fit riding rail trails. Nothing like a healthy lifestyle
Regards
Binnsy.”



. Kevin Browning – attached the following photo attached to a Christmas wishes email -



Det 131 vehicle Christmas 1968



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...

. **Rieny Nieuwenhof** – “Hello Dicko,

Thanks for your catch -up. You are right the rain has eased but flooding in the lower reaches of the Murray is still expected. You have to feel for those residents who have had to clean up more than once. Insurance premiums have already gone up for those not affected (like us), but the people who didn't have insurance will be suffering more.

We have completed a full round of social activities for our members (and friends) –

- Veterans Health week,
- a 3-day bus tour to Warrnambool,
- a tour of the Geelong Botanic gardens,
- a tour of the local Aboriginal Cultural Centre,
- a Blokes Day out and several Ladies lunches.
- We also celebrated our Christmas Lunch last week.

The work of the Vietnam Veterans Centre will slow down now until the new year.

There is increasing talk about closure plans, as sub branches face the inevitable decline in numbers and people willing to take on roles within the organisation.

Here in Geelong we are like so many others with memberships dropping.

It should come as no surprise that Vietnam veterans, average age 75 +, have all of their entitlements in place and don't need much help dealing with the DVA. It is the **younger veterans** who now need the greatest support, so there will continue to be a need for veteran services, increasingly provided by local RSLs and their welfare teams.

The new Labor federal government has promised more Veteran and Families Welfare Centres (Hubs), with paid Advocates and allied services provision across the country, and one is being planned for Geelong in 2025.

The role of Advocate is increasingly being taken up by younger veterans, although there are not enough to deal with the significant backlog of claims in the system. (refer Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide).

The face of veteran welfare (wellbeing) will be very different to the one most Vietnam veterans have experienced.

Till next time - Rieny Nieuwenhof, Geelong.”

. **John Vitkovsky** – “Settling into our new home in Victor Harbor, S.A. Bit different going to a restaurant 5 minutes away compared to a 150km round trip when we were out in the bush in Victoria. No dirt roads or kangaroos. With 2.5 acres, my Husqvarna ride-on mower was not up to the job, so got a 54" cut zero turn mower with, would you believe, cruise control and stubby holder. Great machine. Can mow the lot every 3 weeks in 2 hours.

Just joined the South Coast Veterans Association. Not part of RSL, mainly made of Vietnam vets, some Navy blokes and a couple of Submariners. They have over 100 members and are actively supported by DVA. Weekly Thursday arvo coffee meetings at various cafes and monthly dinners at various venues. This Friday's dinner meeting has 70 confirmed bookings so far. They are pretty active and don't have much good to say about local RSLs.

Been here in Victor Harbor for a bit over 3 months. Covered the roof with over 12Kw of solar panels - our first quarterly bill for power was \$340 in credit, and that's getting only 8 cents feed-in tariff, so happy with that. We are not connected to mains water (have 100,000 litres in tanks), or sewer, so pretty self-sufficient.

Other than that, brought my firearms back to S.A. from Vic. Had a firearms and dealer's licence in S.A. for 40 years. Had to do a TAFE course in Vic. to qualify for a licence, and was licensed there for more than 20 years. Now moved to S.A. and had to do another TAFE course to be able again to register my firearms in S.A., where they were originally registered. All up cost over \$500. So much for uniform firearms legislation in Australia. Probably a money raising exercise.

Poked my head back into S.A. and went to get an S.A driver's license and was informed that between 2012 and 2015, I had lost 12 demerit points and have been banned from driving for 3 months. Travelling back and forth from Vic. to S.A. visiting my mum in nursing home. My wife lost 3 of those points (driving my car), but can't argue the point as the first offence was 10 years ago. Damn!!

Pic at right of going away present from Balmoral RSL sub branch in Vic, where I was heavily involved.



Anyway, that's about it. Have a good Christmas.
John Vitkovsky.”

. **Steve Wynn** – another great piece from one of our ardent correspondents and ZOOMers –

“G'day Mate,

Good news you are both well, was that fighting fit too? 3 months, it only seems like 9.

I would love to go to the dentist and get some teeth out but can't without going off the blood thinners for 3 days, then the dentist is enough to set off my AF, bloody catch 22, so stuck with broken teeth, besides those crowns cost a fortune here. That was more than three words too, when you were in Mexico City did you partake of any cartel products, while Helen wasn't looking, maybe Helen slipped something in your drink when you weren't looking?

Nothing but rain 'down under', even Summer was a fizzer, began cold and wet, yippee. At least the cold nights allow one to snuggle under the blankets and sleep, but hot nights are just toss and turn all damn night, there have only been about three hot nights so far, yippee again.

Yeah damn world has gone mad, I feel for the poor buggers paying tax to gov'n's that waste their (taxpayers) money. I don't think I could count a handful of polities I would feed, all gone woke and green without any scientific evidence to back up bankrupting the country. I have been spending the \$ as fast as I can unload them, only on necessities of course, just keeping a little aside for when the country is in a hole. "You will own nothing, and be happy", yeah sure.

Careful mate, social media can work the other way too, like get you hung, or worse still, maybe 'cancelled'. Have to look up the book, I am sure I will enjoy it, I enjoy everything else you write.

By March we could all be speaking Chinese, so bring your translation book with you. Did you really attempt to learn Spanish, I have studied (Uni) 4 different languages and remember almost nothing of any of them? At least you get to use Spanish, or are you just swearing in English and the locals think it your attempting to speak Spanish.

I think you guys believe I am having a lend of you about my concreting efforts. It all began when my wife said "That Pizza oven the kids bought us has sat in the carport for nearly five years now" I believe that is female code for when the hell are you going to get it built so we can eat 'real' Pizzas. Being a dutiful and obedient husband I set out to build the Pizza oven. Bugger, have you thought about it, I wish I had before embarking on such an enterprise. It is a mammoth job, building a slab to hold almost a tonne, the oven is just over 500kg alone, laying cement blocks and filling them with cement, another slab on top of the blocks to build the oven on, mate it never ends. I have included a pic of where I am up to now, to prove I was not telling porkies. The ground slab is done, 6" thick for the blockwork to sit on and 4" thick to walk around the oven, with plenty of steel embedded. Concrete 4 posts in the ground for a roof for shelter from the sun, if it ever appears again. Buy iron and put it on the timbers for a roof, lay blocks and fill with cement all done, almost anyway, I am still filling the blocks. I intended doing full block work walls on all sides but decided to go with 4 big corners of blocks instead, I reasoned the gaps between the blocks could be used to put firewood to be kept dry under the oven, also snakes and spiders need somewhere to live. Absolutely nothing to do with taking short cuts or being lazy, OK maybe just a little bit of lazy.

At this rate of building, I could be approaching completion mid 2023, if I last that long. If you check up on the satellite, you will see the roof of the Pizza oven on the North side of the house at the Eastern end, between my man cave and the figs, blueberries and strawberries. The grapes, passionfruit, pear trees and mangos are right behind the Pizza oven, with a paw-paw just to the South, so if the Pizzas are too burnt, I can resort to fruit.

I did not know if I would make the last meeting, I was promised by my new ISP they would ring me back between 10:00 and 11:00 Tuesday morning to reconfigure my new, hellish expensive, modem. I am still waiting for the call, typical. I am used to NBN stuffing up my internet, but they let me know in advance that are working on the lines or node etc, so I go out and watch them and make sure my internet is working before they leave. The NBN contractors laid all new copper from the node about 400m away, right to the pit in front of my block, but when they re-connected all the copper wires back up they didn't connect mine to the right pair. I had to run out to the street and get them to hook up the right cables. I mention this because every time NBN play with anything to do with my internet, I have problems. About a week ago my modem switched off and came back on, that disconnected everything in the house from the internet, including my 2 inverters. It also killed almost all my wifi signal, no wifi except within a couple of metres of the modem. I have to reconfigure my inverters and reconnect them back up to the wifi, that takes about 10 mins for Alpha-ESS but a good hour for the Fronius, so I was not happy, Jan. Then there are 3 iPads, 3 smart TV's, 2 TV boxes, 3 phones, my wifi extender and everything connected to the extender, so I got up the ISP. In the end, it turned out the ISP has remotely changed the modem setup and my wifi is good again with 55mbps from my wifi extender, so the actual modem must be running around 60mbps, I can connect an ethernet cable to the modem and test the speeds there but as long as the extender is running at 50 I don't care what the modem is doing. Very happy again. I can get inside the modem and lock the ISP out but won't bother in case they need to remotely access it again. What the connected world has to put up with, oh dear. Take care and stay safe you two, Steve Wynn."



. Graham Williams – "Hola Paul and Helen,

Once Covid restrictions ended here, it turned into a very hectic year for us.

After Anzac Day, the first of 3 trips all booked pre-Covid came up. We were fortunate not to lose any money at all on these as all were booked and paid for.

First off headed to Europe in May/June. Started off in Frankfurt followed by 3 days in Prague before heading to Basel in Switzerland. 5 days there before joining a river ship for a 14-day cruise from Basel to Amsterdam visiting all places in between along the Moselle and Rhine Rivers. Only got 2 days of light drizzle the entire trip with most days warm and sunny. Finished spending 5 days in and around Amsterdam before travelling home.

In September/October back to Europe again, this time Switzerland where we did 2 weeks of Switzerland by train managing to stretch that to 3 weeks. Amazing country, and again, we were lucky with the weather. Again, 2 days of light rain on and off in Zurich prior to flying home. An amazing country to be sure but very expensive.

Final trip was a solo for me back to Vietnam on tour of duty, number 26, where I travelled around catching up with friends and a number of vets now living there. The number of veterans living there is certainly dwindling both from natural attrition and the fact quite a few have been moving to either Cambodia or Thailand. While I did not get a full handle on that situation it is a visa thing. Present requirements I think have changed with those not married to Vietnamese women now needing to renew their visa every 30 days. Easiest way for that is a trip to the Cambodian border, go through the motions there and return with a new 30-day visa. With both Thailand and Cambodia now offering retirement visas that last several years, quite a few people seem to be taking that option. Like everywhere else in the world Covid has changed many things in Vietnam and like here there are still people presenting with that lurgy.

Anyway, sent you a few pics that show Vung Tau as it is today.....only arrived home yesterday and found your email today. Tomorrow I will probably crash and burn but that's another story.

In between trips was carted off by ambulance on 2 occasions for R&R in John Flynn Hospital in Tugun.

First time another severe asthma attack (I still can't believe at age almost 76 I would be diagnosed with Asthma of all things).

The second was a head shaker. Woke with my right knee swollen almost to the size of my melon and the colour of Santa's suit. Could not get up, walk, even pain galore just to move. Once they got me to hospital the diagnosis was "Pseudo gout." Unlike normal gout that can be controlled by medication for the most part there is nothing one can do about Pseudo gout except ride it out however long it takes...in my case 13 days. On the bright side the hospital does serve reasonably good food. I was not impressed when the doctors told me pseudo gout was like the add on TV for VB beer. You know...you can get it here, you can get it there, you can get it anywhere! My first thought was OMG don't let it happen when I go to Vietnam, but it seems I have survived to fight again for now. Que Sera, whatever will be will be. Will be having a quiet Xmas here at home just the 2 of us. Surprisingly, Jenni was rostered off for Xmas and not so lucky, rostered on for duty for New Year but it worries us not. Haven't been out for New Years in at least 30 years and as for Xmas with the tourists pouring in here my shadow will not darken the street outside till at least after Boxing Day...Bah, humbug!!!

The 2 of us will sit outside with 3 eskys, the beer esky, the bourbon esky and the prawn esky surveying the Piggabeen Ponderosa, watching the grass grow and listening to music.

Note: - For this all music released after 1985 has been banned for the day. After that, we will see what the new year serves up to us and come up with a number of cunning plans of action.

That's it mate from downtown West Tweed Heads.

Will take this opportunity to wish both Helen and yourself a Happy and safe Xmas or as it is said in Mexico "Felice Navidad." As far as golf goes try and burgle yourself a higher handicap and congratulations for another year of "Eyes and Ears." You do amazing work.

Best Wishes, Stay safe,

Graham Williams.

P.S. photos to follow separately.

From the Advocate's Desk...

A Note from Peter Pioro as to his future –

"We are going to stop active advocacy work as of Friday 16 December 2022.

I will continue Mentor work till the Level 1 Advocate completes Level 2 and takes over.

Peter Pioro OAM

JP NSW, JP (Qual) QLD, Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Advocate Level 2, Military Welfare Advocate Level 2 Mentor"

Ed – Peter's services will be sadly missed.

Ed – an additional note added, as in the past we have had Members reach hurdles with regards to affairs that arise in their or families passing.



The following was extracted from the following link -

https://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjgwnxvvn7AhViNEQIHxDMB8AQFnoECDwQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dva.gov.au%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Ffiles%2Fpublicatio ns%2Fhealth%2FPlanning_ahead%2Fkitp00064.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3JqUqUtvHVWeb6MAEr5bha

Planning Ahead - A GUIDE TO PUTTING YOUR AFFAIRS IN ORDER PREPARING FOR AND COPING WITH BEREAVEMENT

ISBN 978 1 920720 81 0

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FOREWORD

Many members of the veteran community are reaching a stage in life in which they may be considering the impact that bereavement could have on their loved ones. In particular, they may be thinking about what they can do now to assist their loved ones manage such an event in the future.

Planning Ahead has been designed to provide information to help veterans and their families prepare for bereavement. We hope that the information will be useful for you.

The personal information and checklists included in the booklet and folder will help ensure that important information is available to families when it is needed.

Many ex-service organisations and a number of other key organisations have assisted with this booklet, including the Public Trustee's Office, the Law Society of New South Wales, Tobin Brothers Funeral Directors, and the Australian Pensioners and Superannuants Federation. The cooperation and contribution of these organisations has been invaluable.

The services and organisations listed in the booklet, including the Department of Veterans' Affairs, are always ready to provide whatever assistance you may require.

You occupy a special place within the Australian community. The Australian Government and the Department of Veterans' Affairs are committed to listening to your needs and responding in a way that recognizes your importance in Australia's past, present and future.

Ed – I hope this may be of some help.

. Keith Ayliffe – forwarded the following...

"G'Day Fellow LSTAA Members

Onward 's and upwards

Just an update

Just a note to catch you up with 131 Bty travel arrangements another change 131 - 20 STA Regt - 20 Regt- to the air force still a gunner Regiment. Keith."

A transition of authority parade was conducted at Gallipoli Barracks to mark the change of the **20th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery**, under the **Command of Forces Command to Aviation Command**.

The transfer will see Aviation Command bring the crewed and uncrewed community together through the development of a robust fighting concept to lead a major increment in capability for Army.

Commander 16th Aviation Brigade, Brigadier Dean Thompson CSC said, it is an exciting time for 20 Regt and Army Aviation.

"The introduction of artillery expertise into aviation capability is essential for Army Aviation to achieve its purpose," Brigadier Thompson said.

"It is a privilege to have the 20 Regt personnel joining the ranks." WO2 Kim Allen.

Terry Erbs added the following information on the 20 Regiment, RAAA's transference (an extract out of the Army Magazine Edition 1526, 8th December 2022) ...



Aviation capability combined...

Capt Carolyn Barnett

20 Regt, RAA has transferred from Forces Command to Aviation Command.

The transfer, which was officially marked at a transition-of-authority parade at Gallipoli Barracks on November 18, brings the crewed and uncrewed aviation community together.

Cmdr 16 Avn Bde Brig Dean Thompson, said it was an exciting time for 20 Regt and Army Aviation.

"The introduction of artillery expertise into aviation capability is essential for Army Aviation to achieve its purpose," Brig Thompson said.

"This change provides opportunities for members to develop new skills, and enhance our mission of delivering aviation capability to support Army's generation of land power to the joint force."

The regiment originated at 31 Locating Battery at Georges Heights, Sydney, on June 10, 1952, as a citizens' military forces unit.

Formed in 2006, the mission of 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment (20 STA Regt) is to detect and identify the location of a target in sufficient detail to permit the effective employment of joint fires and effects.

20 STA Regt – the precursor of 20 Regt, RAA – saw service in East Timor, Solomon Islands, Iraq, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea and

South-East Asia, operating a variety of surveillance and target acquisition equipment.

In 2007, the regiment deployed a Skylark UAV detachment to support operations in East Timor.

Through its service life, the Skylark system accumulated 1500 hours, making the regiment one of the most successful operators in the world.

The ScanEagle UAS, in service from 2007 to 2013, amassed 45,000 hours of operational flying in Afghanistan and Iraq, and was replaced by the Shadow UAS from March 2012.

Three Shadow batteries deployed to Tarin Kot over the period until November 2013, conducting 10,000 flying hours. In recent years, Army has taken its capability subject matter experts to increased levels of tactical agility by deploying mission-specific force elements of uncrewed tactical aerial systems, deploying smaller than battery-sized contingents.

Brig Thompson said the regiment had gone from strength to strength during its proud history.

"The regiment's identity, rich culture and traditions will be preserved and celebrated within Aviation Command," he said.

"It is a privilege to have 20 Regiment personnel joining the ranks."

Notice Board – Hey, see what's news?

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

Controversial call to arms



It's 50 years since the last conscription scheme ended. **The Australian Army History Unit** reports.



National Service Scheme recruits, with backpacks, water canteens and rifles, march along a dirt road during training at Puckapunyal in 1967, before serving in Vietnam.
Photo: Courtesy the AWM C1160501

Australia's National Service scheme, suspended in 1959, was revived by the Liberal-Country Party Coalition Government in 1964 with the *National Service Act*.

At the time, Prime Minister Robert Menzies informed parliament that the scheme was a response to the deterioration in Australia's strategic position, in part requiring an increase in Army's workforce.

It operated until December 1972, when the newly elected Whitlam Labor government suspended it.

The government of the day considered Communism and its influence in South-East Asia, the territorial ambitions of Indonesia in the West New Guinea region, and the consequences of Indonesian "confrontation" of Malaysia as reasons for the deterioration in Australia's strategic position.

As a result, Mr Menzies said "the Regular Army should be built up as rapidly as possible" in Australia's national interest.

The Australian economy was in a period of "more than full employment", hence voluntary recruitment would likely not achieve the required Army strength in the time needed; and the related training effort would see the Regular Army "cease to be an effective fighting force and become for some ... time ... a training organisation".

The scheme introduced a birthday ballot requiring 21-year-old men who resided in Australia to register with the Department of Labour and National Service.

If balloted in, men were obliged to perform two years' continuous full-time service in the Army (reduced to 18 months in 1971), followed by three years' part-time service in the Army Reserves. Full-time 'conscripts' were potentially liable for 'special overseas service' in areas that included Vietnam and the Malayan peninsula.

The highly-publicised registration was conducted biannually: in January, for those who turned 20 in the first half of the year, and in July, for those turning 20 in the second half.

Non-registration was an offence. Those who did not register without reasonable explanation were automatically balloted.

The Vietnam moratorium protests in 1970-71 were the largest public demonstrations in Australia's history.

The protesters were generally opposed to Australia's commitment to the war in Vietnam and particularly opposed to conscription.

About 200,000 people took part in the first protest march, the largest in Melbourne attracting about 70,000. The second and third protests attracted less participants, with the second marred by violence. The selection for military service by ballot was identical to the procedure used from 1957 for the earlier national service scheme.

About five weeks after the close of registration, numbered marbles representing birth dates were placed in two barrels. A pre-arranged number of marbles were drawn randomly from the barrels one at a time. Within a month, all men whose birth date was drawn knew if they were 'balloted in' or 'balloted out' of the scheme. Those who married before 'call-up', who had serious criminal records, posed a security risk, or who had joined the Navy, Air Force or Army Reserves were provided with indefinite deferments. Temporary deferments were possible on the grounds of hardship or compassion, and educational commitments. Exemptions were considered after ballots were drawn. They were for either physical or mental disability, occupation, or conscience. Automatic exemptions were granted on occupational grounds to theological students, ministers of religion and members of religious orders. Indigenous Australians as defined by the Act were also exempt, however, they could volunteer to serve.

'Defaulters' were those who failed to register at the required time, provide notice of a change of address, attend a medical examination, report for call-up or provide mandatory requested information.

Draftees who obstructed the process or made false and misleading statements were also deemed defaulters. In all, 14 men were prosecuted and imprisoned for failing to obey their call-up notice.

National servicemen, on completion of their continuous full-time service, were entitled to re-establishment and civilian employment benefits.

Those benefits protected the obligations they had entered before national service, and entitled them to return to their previous employment if they had been with their employer for at least 30 days before their service. Benefits included business loans, housing grants and vocational training.

Between 1964 and 1972, **804,286 men registered for national service, 63,735 were conscripted to the Army. Of the 19,205 who served in Vietnam, 200 were killed and 1279 wounded.**

Read more in Edwards, P. 1997. A Nation at War: Australian politics, society and diplomacy during the Vietnam War 1965-1975: the official history of Australia's involvement in Southeast Asian conflicts 1948-1975, Volume VI, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.

Ed – as a final note click on this link and visit “ARMY” it’s a great read -

<https://www.armynewspaper.defence.gov.au/army-news/december-8-2022/flipbook/0/>

Just one more final note: Ed also thought that only 7.92% of men who registered were conscripted was curious – what was wrong with the other 92%? I guess that number was enough to fill the ranks required.

Certificate of Appreciation

Last updated: 12 October 2022

If you're a veteran or a veteran's family member, you may be able to apply for a Certificate of Appreciation. These are issued as a national gesture of thanks for military service.

Why issue certificates?

The certificates are a way of expressing the nation's gratitude to those who served: overseas in Australia's Defence Force during the Second World War and in overseas wars, conflicts and peace operations since on the home front in the Second World War

They do not confer any eligibility for entitlements under the:

[Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986](#) / [Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004](#) / [Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988](#)

Certificates are issued as part of the Australian Government's Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants program.

Who can apply -

You can apply for a certificate if you are a: veteran who served in the wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations for which certificates are available family member on behalf of a deceased eligible person

What service qualifies?

Certificates are issued for service with Australia's Defence Forces:
in overseas wars, conflicts or peace operations during the specified dates in the application form on the home front during the Second World War

Information about who is eligible for a certificate is in the guidelines:

[Certificate of Appreciation Guidelines \(PDF 940 KB\)](#)

[Certificate of Appreciation Guidelines \(DOCX 71 KB\)](#)

Steps to apply

To apply for a Certificate of Appreciation:

download and complete the [application form](#)

send your completed application form to your local [federal member](#)



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, Vic Nth – Ron Mason, WA - Barry Guzder

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

Presidential perambulations

An unusual year for we New South Wales residents. Too much rain during the year was depressing. Now summer has finally arrived and after last summer's no-show, it is being enjoyed.

Some of the dictionaries nominate a word of the year. For me it was 'game-changer'. Every medical, social or other possible advance was identified thus by the enthusiastic media. Most times the media reporter failed to advise the original game and was usually too vague about the new game. Maybe NRL to AFL were the two games in Australia, or even the World Cup and the current cricket test series.

In 2022 mispronunciations were aplenty. ABC seem to insist on "vulnerable" rather than vulnerable, and many seem to think we live in "Ostreya" (PM included). Sad that. The wet stuff we had so much of is often confused with a jail officer. Other speakers seem to not understand that "ts" in words should not be pronounced as ds. And to call one media class 'Social' is ludicrous in the extreme.

But, I bet none of our readers 'can't wait' for next Christmas, because there will be twelve full months, less a few days, that will require such waiting. And that waiting will be totally time and calendar dependant.

From the 131 Locators Association perspective 2022 was generally a good year. Sure, the ZOOM microphone only worked properly when not needed and turnout for Anzac Day in Sydney was disappointing. We found a few new members. However, we lost some too and that is challenging to cope with when many were mates who we dossed down with in a Nui Dat tent or listening post.

On behalf of our Committee I extend our collective best wishes to all readers for a generally healthy and successful 2023. Allen.



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

ZOOM MEETING: Date: Tuesday, 13th December, 2022 at 1105hrs...

. **Pertinent Points** – extracted from the 131 Locators Association Committee meeting...

Attendees (ZOOMed) were: (17 – a full house!)

Terry Erbs, Paul Dickson, Ian Campbell, Bob Billiards, Ernie Newbold

Laurie Sawyer, Allen Morley, Bert Blink, Steve Wynn, Merv Nairn

Kevin Browning, Barry Guzder, Ged Carroll, Gordon Malcolm, Graham Dignam

Ron Mason, Rieny Nieuwenhof



Apologies: Were received from Nick Proskurin, George Lane, Warwick Brooker other State Reps and Jim Fitzgerald

Financial Membership is currently **126**, plus Associates **2**, plus Affiliates **16** Total **144**
Plus Lapsed as at 1/12/2022 **36**.

Presidents report:

Allen referenced -

- . The end of the calendar year and 2 months break until the next meeting in February.
- . His difficulties processing changes to his Opal Card (Transport)
- . Promises (or not) by medicos to remove foreign matter from his elbow before Xmas (or not).

Public Officer Report:

Following the AGM Gordon reported that the Fair-Trading report had been lodged and paid and a copy will be provided to the Committee.

Webmaster Update:

Webmaster **Bob Billiards** advised Facebook now has 325 members and that the Newsletter had been accessed on 117 occasions. He mentioned the website is now seen as an historical document with most personal interactions happening on Facebook which is more immediate and responsive.

Health Report:

- . **Barry Guzder** advised he was well along his Prostate treatment journey and had 3 needles to go – all in the rear end!
- . Covid has affected **Gordon Malcolm** who is 3 weeks into his rehab, and **Merv Nairn**, who has just started his isolation.
- . **Grahame Dignam** explained the cause of his hospitalization and reported he was now well
- . **Ron Mason** advised all was well in the district now the floods are gone. He was diagnosed with a motor neurone condition and is having treatment. We wish him all the best.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

- . **Terry Erbs** reported he attended 20 Regiment and met the new OC David Hickey and while there he handed over the Queens Banner on behalf of the LSTAA. 133 Bty is being reformed but a start date is TBA
- . **Dicko** reminded us he left SVN 55 years ago 12 Dec 1967 but where did the time go?
- . **Bob Billiards** admitted having possession of certain Military items and he can't remember how they are in his possession.
- . **Laurie Sawyer** is still trying to catch up with **George Lane** and **"Spike" Chase** for coffee. He has some photos to share and will send them to Dicko for the website and posterity.
- . **Merv Nairn** has received his framed "Certificate of Appreciation" for Military service from this local Federal MP.
- . **Kevin Browning** attended the 150 th Anniversary of RAA at Victoria Barracks and was most impressed by the presentation, ceremony and the gunners present.
- . **Barry Guzder** is off to NZ in the New Year for a visit.
- . A catch-up group will be gathering for lunch at Canley Heights RSL for 10 th January 2023

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.

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 14th February, 2023 at 1100hrs

Venue: to be advised

Also, available via ZOOM link to be advised



. 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	† 10.07.2022
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	ROGERMY HOLMES	3795910	22 07 1970	25 02 1971	
15	GEORGE STAZIKER Lt Col	2108436	14 04 71	01 05 1971	† 29.12.2012
15	PHIL. ENDICOTT	2783419	06 01 1967	27 09 67	
16	KEN OSBORNE WO1	48543	18 04 67	02 04 68	RAEME
16	EDWARD COOPER	44231	26 08 1969	21 01 70	
16	LESLIE SAURINE	2791863	24 03 1970	17 12 70	
18	PETER SZABO	38752	26 03 1969	25 03 1970	† 07.12.2007
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	† 28.03.2010

*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 isn't too bad, and I guess isn't going to change. Maybe a miracle may happen?

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 175 and we've sent out 175. Ed – Maybe we need to draw in a deep one so as to hold our breathes for a while longer.

. **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: Habben, Michael William
Nickname: 'Mick'
Service No: 3788307 **Rank:** Gunner
SVN In: 05 05 1967 **SVN Out:** 01 02 1968
DoB: 06 02 1945 **DoD:** 26 12 2022

Lest We Forget



This is Last Minute information received from Chris Bouilly via Vic Danko on 31.12.2022. Paul Dickson subsequently found the date of death and funeral notice in the Herald Sun -

Michael sadly passed away at the Stawell Hospital, Victoria on **Dec 26th 2022**

Funereal Notice –

HABBEN, Michael William

Publication: Herald Sun

Date Listed: 29/12/2022

Location: Stawell

Requiem Mass will be offered for the late Mr Michael William Habben at St Patrick's Church, Stawell on Wednesday Jan. 4th 2023 commencing at 12.30pm followed by burial at the Stawell Cemetery. Live streaming of the service will be available via our website, please click on the live streaming tab to view the service.

Mike's Locator Profile -

Surname: Habben **Given Names:** Michael William **Nickname:** Mick **State of Origin:** Vic

What did you do before the army: Primary School Teacher

Service dates from: 02.02.66 **to:** 01.02.68 **Recruit training centre:** Puckapunyal

Intake No.: 3rd **Regimental No:** 3788307

Dates in Nui Dat from: 05.05.67 **to:** 20.12.67 **What was your location/s in Nui Dat:** Radar, Horseshoe

Who were you there with: Jim Hogno, Wirey Hackett, Bob Retrot, Mick Campbell, Roger Long, Chris Bouilly, Ted Doust, Frank Ipsa, and heaps of others whose names escape me but whose faces I recall.

Last Rank: Gunner

What did you do after the army: Back to teaching, mainly at a Special School in Stawell, but then back to Stawell Primary and normal kids for the last 12 years until retirement in 2000. I now play bowls in summer and spend winter up north somewhere where I can keep warm. This year my wife (Lesley) and I took the caravan to Darwin for eight weeks and popped over to Bali while we were there. Fishing is also on the agenda and am always keen to take the boat to SA in search of King George whiting.

Anything else of interest:

I must reply to Allen Morley's request for information on the late Mick "Doc" Campbell. I knew Mick prior to Vietnam as we had been to school together at Sale. There was one memorable occasion at Nui Dat when he and I decided to take some R&R at the American camp next door but things didn't begin well as Mick learnt upon the slot ball machine in the bar and broke the glass. Things didn't improve as I backed him in a drinking competition with a couple of yanks and then refused to pay, claiming foul play by the opposition. When we picked ourselves up off the floor, I had a broken nose and Mick had been asleep for a while. Getting home was a real problem as it was dark by then and arrangements had to be made to get us home through the checkpoint. Needless to say, we were charged and copped a heavy fine - no hard feelings Lt Yerbury.

After discharge Mick worked in various mines including Omeo (gold) and King Island and ended up a gold miner at Adelaide Lead near Maryborough in Victoria. He lived with his partner and child in a rough but comfortable hut in the bush near the mine. He was known locally as "Mick the Miner" and was a regular pub visitor at Talbot or Maryborough unless he was banned, which happened more than once. At around the age of 42 he passed away in his sleep. His partner, Helen, heard his last breath. Mick worked hard and played hard. He was the most knockabout bloke you could meet - shirt out, bootlaces undone, carefree and not a worry in the world. He was a good friend, even if somewhat embarrassing at times. I attended his funeral. He is buried at Talbot.

What city / town do you live in now: Stawell, Vic



Rob Retrot and self, amusing some kids.

If you have any memories, photos of and with Mick you'd care to share, then send them to me –
Paul Dickson at 131eyesandears@gmail.com

May He Rest in Peace and Never Forgotten.



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



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.1stbn83rdartylvietnam.com>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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