

THE EYES and EARS

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Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA

**Unit Citation for Gallantry (UCG) awarded to the Detachment and those who served at
The Battles of Coral/Balmoral in South Vietnam, 1968**

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



RTA'ing - 9th June, 1971...
Behind Michael Butler and Ron Ryan is Les Falkai and Peter Saint.

“End of Tour Ritual” * - in the ritual photo, Michael on the left and Ron in the middle. I can't remember who the other three "victims" are. Apologies for the poor quality (scanned 35mm slides).

***Ritual explanation** – being doused with buckets of water, having shirts ripped, and being sprayed with shave cream. Can't remember if there was anything else involved.

I have no idea how or when it originated. Maybe Mike Butler might be able to shed some light on it.

Photos and information supplied by Hilton Holloway



RTA Project for 2022

How about you send me Return To Australia (RTA) photos ASAP, so I can continue with
July next month...

Here's who RTA'd in a June any year – that's a pretty good number, can anyone think of anyone else!

1966 – Nil

1967 – William Prenter (Late), Alan Thomson (Late)

1968 – David Pimm

1969 – Peter Pettiford, Kevin Browning*, Terry Erbs, Richard Flavell, Martin Kryntjes (Late), Johannes Las, Stewart McAlpine

1970 – Joe Librizzi, Peter Bennett, Gregory Peck, Robert Hargreaves, Kevin Banks, Paul Angell, Peter Ravelje, Andrew Cshivcsik, David Dodd, Malcolm Musgrave, Allen Wheatley, Stanley Todkill

1971 – William Prenter (Late), Ian Earle, Peter Summers, Michael Butler, Geoffrey Carthew, Dennis Avery, Ronald Ryan

Iraq

2006 – Peter Westcott

*Kevin Browning returned again in a June after a later short-stint in 1971.

. New Government, New Ministers of interest –

Richard Marles MP – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

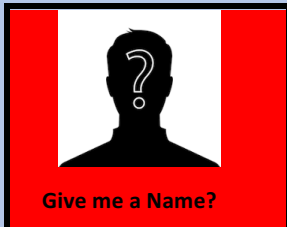
Lawyer and career with the TWU/ACTU. He was a [Parliamentary Secretary](#) from 2009 to 2013, and served as [Minister for Trade](#) in the [second Rudd Government](#) from June to September 2013. He was a member of the [Shadow Cabinet](#) from Labor's defeat at the [2013 election](#) to their victory at the [2022 election](#).



Matt Keogh MP– Veterans Affairs & Defence Personnel

Lawyer and ran successfully in the 2016 federal election for the electorate of Burt. Following the [2019 Federal Election](#), Keogh was elected to the Labor [front bench](#) and allocated the portfolios of [Shadow Minister for Defence](#) Industry, [Shadow Minister](#) for WA Resources and Shadow Minister Assisting for Small and Family Business.





The “Lost Locator Project”

This Project is being re-ignited for 2022.

Our current list contains the names of ? 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 on the web site.

Paul Dickson

Get in touch with me via 131eyesandears@gmail.com

The following data is extracted from the year 1971, that the ?? members began their tour of SVN...

NAME	Regt. No.	BORN	IN SVN	OUT SVN	
ALLAN ROBOTHAM	6709864	1950	25 05 1971	18 11 1971	
FREDERICK MARWICK	45285	1948	10 03 1971	28 06 1971	131
" "			28 06 1971	20 12 1971	12 Fd Regt
REX ARNOLD	424096	1949	16 12 1970	29 05 1971	
" "			29 05 1971	16 09 1971	Ind 161 Recce Flt.
JOHN HOMER	5717596	1949	17 03 1971	02 08 1971	131
" "			02 08 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
PETER BARRY	2794949	1949	17 03 1971	04 08 1971	131
" "			04 08 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
TERRY WELSH	4721779	1949	03 03 1971	29 06 1971	131
" "			30 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd REGT
GARRY GRIMWOOD	2795771	1949	24 03 1971	01 07 1971	131
" "			01 07 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
NORMAN JONES	5717611	1950	04 05 1971	01 12 1971	12 Fd Regt / AACC
ROBERT HARRIS Sgt.	213514	1942	10 02 1971	29 07 1971	

I look forward to hearing from you with regards to the above, plus any other years that you may want to have a look at.

. 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 –

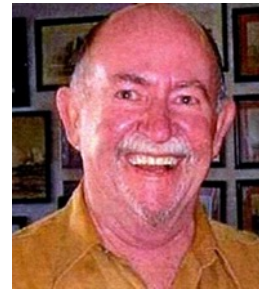
Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

Ed – The following is the commencement of a series 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.

I am proud to be a minor part of this publication.

"Gunners in Vietnam, 1965-1971" aka by Jeff initially as – "the book"



By Jeff Evans

Edited by Paul Dickson
in conjunction with Kevin Browning,
who knew Jeff as a workmate and a friend.

An Introduction by Kevin Browning...

Jeffrey Bruce Evans is a story in itself. However, we don't have enough information, as this was being compiled some 10 years after his leaving us.

Kevin has been instrumental in providing the plethora of available information. "the book" as Jeff called it, initially, is unfinished due to failing health, but we needed to put it into a format where it can be stored on the 131 Locators Association web site so future generations, not only Locators, may be enlightened by one man's efforts to recount an Army life and beyond.

Kevin reflects: *The following is a proud reflection my time with Jeff and I am very grateful for the opportunity to be able expand on these experiences in a written sense.*

I first served with Jeff when I arrived in Vietnam in April 1971 to replace Dave Doyle, as the Detachment Survey Section Sergeant. Lieutenant Jeff Evans was the Survey Section Commander and had arrived a week after Dave's mine incident. It was an interesting tour with many challenges including the departure of the Detachment and our transfer to Headquarter Battery, 12 Field Regiment, and the need to train the replacement surveyors provided by the Regiment to bring us up to strength and then the withdrawal of 1st Australian Task Force.

In 1975, we met up again but this time in the UK. Jeff, now a Captain, was on the officers Gunnery Staff Course at the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill and I had arrived several months later to attend the Long Gunnery Course. Our families accompanied us. Jeff was present at the christening of my son whilst there. We next met up at the School of Artillery where we eventually worked together in Development Wing. It was whilst there that Jeff wrote a paper that was to see the Australian Artillery get the most modern, at the time, weapon locating radar, the AN/TPQ 36. The paper caused the Army to change its previous decision to buy the then 15-year-old British Cymbeline radar.

In 1980 Jeff was promoted Major and moved as Senior Instructor, Locating Wing. In 1982, he moved to Enoggera as Battery Commander 131st Divisional Locating Battery where I was in my second year as BSM (WO1). It was a great year despite the difficulties of operating with very old equipment. Jeff made it a good place to be. When I left at the end of the year the Battery strength was some 220.

Whilst our paths kept crossing it was not until the mid 90s that our next and lasting association resumed. Jeff joined us as a volunteer at the Museum at North Head.

There were many highlights here but perhaps to two significant ones were the restoration of a static 3.7-inch anti-aircraft gun and a radar operated 150 cm searchlight. The former was in poor condition when we started work, nothing worked, but after nearly two years it was fully functional.



The latter (the radar operated light) was in even worse condition and Jeff even questioned my sanity when I first suggested we tackle it. Although not functional to illuminate when we completed, it was in exceptional condition otherwise including the majority of the radar components which we had acquired. It was about this time that Jeff first took ill and despite several bouts of chemo he did not recover.



It was in the year before his illness that Jeff commenced work on the “Gunners in Vietnam”. The aim being to record just how the artillery support was provided. Many of the lessons had been lost and few knew the full picture. Jeff’s background provided him with the best position to tell the full story. He would often run his information past me for comment but my strength was to know whom he should approach.

A great void has been left by Jeff’s passing, not simply because we have lost a great bloke but the “Gunners in Vietnam” story remains unfinished.

Prologue

From the early 1960’s until the author left the Army in the mid 1980’s, the simple philosophy (the 11th Commandment) of Gunners of the Royal Australian Artillery was:

“Thou shall have an independent check”.

The independent check applied to everything which involved, ultimately, the firing of guns. From the original Grid Reference of the Target, to the radio transmission of Fire Orders to the Gun’s Command Post, the calculation of Firing Data, the transmission of that data to the guns, the application of data to the gun sights, the ammunition charge and fuse, to finally the firing of the gun and the Reports sent back to the observer – everything was completed by one person and checked by another – the independent check was part of every Gunner’s DNA.

The independent check applied to the myriad calculations which go on behind the scenes of a gun firing. The surveyors, carrying out accurate survey to the gun positions, have independent checks built into every observation to prove that both the operator and the instrument were correct. The meteorologists, providing messages to the guns, compiled and calculated results with inbuilt checks and balances. Monitors of Unattended Ground Sensor Strings (seismic, acoustic and magnetic sensors) had three or four ways to prove they were ‘sensing’ an enemy soldier, and not an animal. Suffice to say that nothing was left to chance; the safety of our own troops was far too important for chance.

No doubt it was the same for Gunners who have gone before, and no doubt the 11th Commandment continues for the Gunners of today. Irrespective of the technology involved, and the developments which have unfolded since Vietnam, the interaction of soldier and gun has the soldier as the final arbiter. The soldier holds the power to fire the gun, and therefore the soldier is responsible for everything about the gun.

The reason for this was very simple – the gun, irrespective of calibre, is a potent killing and maiming machine and Gunners were determined to do everything in their power to ensure that potency was applied to the enemy, and no-one else. The safety of those being supported by artillery fire was paramount. For the Gunners to develop the high level of trust and faith that was essential for the supported soldiers to enjoy, they (the Gunners) had to be right first time, every time. Mistakes were not acceptable. Many a budding (or practicing) Gun Position Officer walked home from the firing range at the completion of a day's shooting practice, as penalty for making a mistake during training. Many an 'extra' Orderly Officer was performed for the same reason.

By the same token, the Gunners on the gun line had to trust the judgement of the 'observer' in directing the artillery fire close to the supported troops. Predominantly, the observer was a trained artillery officer or Non-Commissioned Officer, that being the structure of the system of artillery support. However, the Corps of origin of the observer was not important. What was important was that they were 'on the spot' and could see and hear what was happening, and therefore they should control the fire support. If they wanted the fire support dangerously close to their position, the Gunners provided. If they wanted it on their position, reluctantly (and after advice) the Gunners complied. This was in stark contrast to the US Army system whereby the Gun Position Officer (at the Guns) made the decisions based on advice received from the observer.

Whilst New Zealand and Australian Gunners were at war in the same country as the Americans, there was little similarity in the way their artillery systems operated. This was in spite of many years of Quadripartite Working Groups and Conferences on standardisation which evolved from the Korean War. Following Korea, America, Britain, Canada and Australia (the ABCA countries) (with New Zealand as 'Observers') saw the need to standardise on many things.

For the Gunners, this meant standardisation of calibres, ammunition, methods of calling for fire, artillery radio procedures, and so on. By the time of our involvement in Vietnam, little had been achieved with the US with respect to standardization of calls for fire and artillery radio procedures. Soldiers everywhere are prone to 'bend' the system, shorten radio procedures, take short-cuts and produce a language of their own, but the US artillery operated in its own world. Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand followed their own doctrines, which were largely in concert, and Americans followed their own doctrine. Those ANZ soldiers, who by necessity became involved with the US artillery, learned to 'interpret' the American jargon, but first contact was often quite a shock.

It was the primacy of the independent check which prompted LTCOL Cubis to write a Minute (RMCC/20/66 dated 24 Jun 66) to all Battery Commanders and remind them of the need for safety. *"There are no safety officers on the gun position, in war ... and a heavy responsibility thus falls on all whose duties involve them in the firing of the guns."* He went on to say that *"If the prescribed drills and checks are observed, both on the gun and in the command post, the possibility of errors occurring is removed."* Furthermore, *"...disciplinary action is to be taken ..."* against personnel who are *"... guilty of carelessness or who otherwise allows an error to occur when it is within their power to prevent it occurring."*

The intention then is to provide a record of how the Australian and New Zealand Gunners operated in South Vietnam, with some reference to the differing American system; to record how the artillery operated and provided support, which was often vital to the supported troops, and how their operations were sometimes vital to their own survival. It is a record of the systems and procedures, some of which were developed specifically for Vietnam, while others were moulded from the doctrinal view pre-Vietnam. It has a technical content because the procedures of artillery are, by their very nature, technical. But it is also a record of just some of the many people and stories, comical incidents and tragedies, which accompanied the technical side of life. The book supports the generally accepted view that, irrespective of the situation, soldiers of all ranks can find humour in most situations; the gunners, both New Zealanders and Australians, were no different in this respect.

Introduction

"FIRE MISSION BATTERY" are, for a gunner, the pre-eminent words in the entire English language. Nothing stands before the urgency, the tension and the sense of duty which the words 'Fire Mission Battery' generate. For the most part, the words mean someone 'out there' is in contact with the enemy and they require our support – fire support – perhaps to give them the edge, perhaps in order to survive. Every gunner has this 'hammered home' during training, to the point where it never leaves his soul. It is why we exist. For Vietnam, the words "CONTACT, WAIT OUT", from a Forward Observer, produced similar tension, but these words were more of a warning, the briefest of 'situation reports'. They meant, 'we are in contact with the enemy, and I will get back to you when I am ready or able'. To the gun battery it also meant, 'in all probability we will be calling on you for fire support'.

It must be said that it was not always "... BATTERY" in the call for fire; it could be less than a battery, 1, 2 or 3 guns, or more than a battery, eg a regiment (of 18 guns). Nonetheless, whatever number of guns the Forward Observer (FO) specified, that is an order to be complied with at the gun position. The FO is on the ground, he is at the fire fight, he is supporting his infantry company commander and, whether or not they had discussed the requirement, this is irrelevant to the guns; the FO is in control of the guns.

In the British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand systems, FOs ordered fire support. Herein lies the major difference between the US and ANZ systems in Vietnam; the US Observer requested fire, with a detailed description of the situation, and the gun line officer made the decision of what fire support should be provided. It was a totally different philosophy, and in those early days, frustrating for the Australians and New Zealanders. LTCOL Ivan Brumfield, CO 1 RAR, cited in Ham, *"openly cursed American tactics;"* together with *"... when the Australians requested a single ranging round, US*

batteries would fire all their guns on the target, in a 'mad minute'." (Ham p147) This was of not helpful to anyone. The year was 1965, the battalion was 1 RAR, in the province of Bien Hoa, before the Australian Task Force arrived in-country.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

"FIRE MISSION BATTERY"; for a gunner, these three words immediately change the landscape. The gun line personnel drop everything to respond to the call for fire support; there is nervous tension; the adrenaline pumps; this is what the gunners live for; their very reason for existing; it is their calling, and they are not going to be found wanting. Lives may well depend on their speed of response and the accuracy of that response.

Part 1 – On Deployment

Chapter 1

The Rationale

Government Decisions

The United States involvement in Vietnam was largely based on a simple premise – South Vietnam had to be 'saved' from communist rule by North Vietnam. The French colonisation of Vietnam ceased in July 1954 with the signing of the Geneva Convention, which divided Vietnam into North and South about the 17th Parallel. Ho Chi Minh had won the first round; now for his reunification of Vietnam, just as it had been prior to colonisation by France in 1858.

The United States involvement reasoned that if South Vietnam fell to the communists, then Laos, Cambodia and other countries, would follow. It was termed by President Eisenhower, the *domino effect*; if one domino (country) falls, the rest of the dominoes will follow. Eisenhower sold this proposition to John F Kennedy on his election to President. With communism to the east (North Vietnam), and non-communists to the west of South East Asia (Thailand, Cambodia, Laos), the CIA determined that Laos should be the 'buffer zone' between Vietnam and the countries to the west. To this end, the CIA waged war in Laos on an unprecedented scale.

Attempting to establish the reason(s) for such an involvement, the Australian involvement in Vietnam has been dissected time and again. Michael Sexton suggests that Australia invited itself to Vietnamⁱ, by pressuring the US Government to ask the South Vietnamese Government to request assistance from Australia. Andrew Drea argues the Australian Government was pressured (by the USA) into supporting the interventionⁱⁱ. Paul Ham details the Australian government's (very strong) offer, and the South Vietnamese government's (very reluctant) acceptance of the commitment of an infantry battalion of 800 menⁱⁱⁱ. With eight separate junta governments in power between Premier Ngo Dinh Diem, assassinated on 2 November 1963, and Air Vice Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky, installed as premier on 19 June 1965, it is a miracle that Prime Minister Menzies could find anyone in power for long enough to make a decision of acceptance, or otherwise, of the offer.

Irrespective of the political reason for Australian involvement, the soldiers' logic was, very simply, we were making a payment on an 'insurance policy' with the US Government – if Australia supported the US in Vietnam then the US would (hopefully) support Australia in times of some future crisis. With the announcement of the British Government, to withdraw all troops east of the Suez, moving toward an alliance with the US seemed like a logical direction for the government to adopt.

At Task Force level, the sentiments were not that much different, "*No-one said so openly, but the army's top brass were under no illusions about their true role in Vietnam: a token political force, a mere gesture, to satisfy the Americans*". But sheeting home the blame for involvement, to government, did not reduce or assist the more immediate and pressing problem for Task Force commanders – there was no given task in Phuoc Tuy Province; there was no direction from government, as BRIG Sandy Pearson stated, "*It's the first war we have gone into without a strategic or political aim ...*"^{iv}

And the problem was not just an Australian one; retired US BRIG Douglas Kinnard, cited in Appy, wrote a book called *The War Mongers*. The book was based on his findings from a survey of 173 US army generals who served as combat commanders in Vietnam. "*Almost 70 percent said they did not really understand the war's objectives*." They had clear missions from time to time, but there was no overall objective, no overall purpose, which they could articulate.^v

Somewhat strangely, public support for the decision in Australia was strong – 64% in a Morgan Gallup Poll. And yet, the first infantry battalion departing for active service was transported from Holsworthy Barracks, in trucks, with tarpaulins closed down, and embarked onto HMAS Sydney from 10.00pm at night. The Sydney, now converted to a troop ship, left Sydney Harbour with only her navigation lights on, after 1.00am^{vi}. Why was the government, which had made the decision to deploy the troops, so determined to hide their departure? Perhaps they wanted to avoid protesters who might want to make a scene? Perhaps they wished to avoid the media who, despite the Gallup Poll, might want to create a negative story? Was this a bad omen for the future of all servicemen and women serving in the Republic of Vietnam?

Australia was already involved in Vietnam through the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) from August 1962. Then, on 28 April 1965, Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced that Australia would send a regular battalion of combat troops to Vietnam. On 29th April, Menzies, confirmed that this would be 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), supported by the 161st Field Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery (161 Bty).

This announcement marked a very significant change to Australia's involvement in Vietnam. This was not simply an escalation of commitment to Vietnam. AATTV personnel were provided in an advisory/training role, assisting the South Vietnamese Army with training in weapons handling, bush-craft and minor tactics. AATTV personnel were not supposed to become involved in fighting with the South Vietnamese troops, but of course they did. The Government's decision to send a battalion, followed by a battery of guns, not only changed the size of the commitment quite markedly, but also changed the commitment to an operational role. This was no longer in a training or advisory role; this was a war footing.

By May 66, less than 12 months after the original commitment, the battalion and two gun batteries had grown to a Task Force of more than 4000 men.

The Modus Operandi of Artillery

Australian and New Zealand artillery operated within the task force providing 'close support' to other arms and services, mainly infantry. To understand the concept of close support, and how it came into being, we need to briefly trace the development of artillery. The original cannons were quite crude in design, had limited range and very limited movement around the battlefield. But they made a considerable difference to the conduct of the battle. Prior to the arrival of artillery, battles were primarily fought and won on the basis of the comparative strengths of the opposing armies. The cannon changed that, *"For what the cannon lacked in one sphere (rapid movement round the battlefield) it made up in another; though it killed few it terrified many, and its effect on morale was considerable ... Courage, armour, numbers, rank were no proof against it, and it took effect at ranges hitherto undreamed of in combat."*^{xvii}

As artillery pieces developed, so the modus operandi of artillery changed. When artillery was first used in the field of battle, it was used in a 'direct fire' role; the enemy could be seen from the guns, and so the guns were aimed at the masses, and fired. The guns were seen as simply another, but better, weapon of destruction; there were no tactics, no real systems of employment, and the concept of 'support' was perhaps being experienced, but not thought through to a logical conclusion – *"Colonel Rimington was very appreciative of the service given by the Left Section (of two guns) ... and would take station with the Section as it came into action and would observe and direct the fighting from the gun line"*.^{xviii} This quotation relates to 'A' Battery service in the Boer War and shows the simplicity of the gun 'system' – directing the fire of the guns from the gun position.

In addition, the earlier methods of deployment did not lend itself to one of the later principles of artillery, the concentration of fire of the guns. *"A Battery remained in South Africa for 18 months, but rarely in this period was it concentrated together as a complete unit. For much of the time sections of two guns were attached to various British columns in different districts. At one stage its guns (six 15 – pr B.L's) were spread over 475 km ..."* Although considerably outgunned by the 80 British batteries, a few Boer guns did have greater range and so could out-shoot the British on occasion. Furthermore, the expert riflemen of the Boer army took to shooting British gunners at extreme ranges. As a result, the British developed a style of indirect fire; concealing the guns behind the crests of hills, they adjusted the guns onto the targets by signals from the crest. The British also *"were often able to float observation balloons with which artillery fire could be directed; this was a luxury not available to the Boer gunners."*

Much was learned from the Boer War; the rapid deployment and redeployment of guns to keep abreast of the battle, the beginnings of the use of indirect fire, the employment of personnel to 'direct' the indirect fire (from nearby crest, via signal, or from observation balloons), the experience of managing men on operations and the opportunity to work and coordinate with a large army. *"But they learned little about the higher-level command of artillery or about the techniques of massed artillery support ... The British artillery had yet to develop the techniques for employing artillery on the modern battlefield."*

The significant difference between the group of WW1 guns and the Boer War guns was the weight of the shell which translated to the weight of firepower. The 15 Pdr (7kg shell) was vastly outgunned by most of the WW1 guns: the 5 inch BL – 23kg shell, 4.7inch Gun – 21kg, 6 inch 30 Cwt – 55kg, 8 inch BL How – 91kg and 9.2 inch How – 132kg. The destructive effect of these guns made the 15 Pdr pale almost to insignificance. And with the increase in destructive power, came an increase in the fear factor.

It was during WW1 that General Sir John Monash and others first conceived of the 'direct support' role of artillery, providing cover for the infantry, protecting the infantry as much as possible, until they had reached their objective(s). *"I had formed the theory that the true role of infantry was not to expend itself upon heroic physical effort, nor to wither away under merciless machine-gun fire, nor impale itself on hostile bayonets, nor to tear itself to pieces in hostile entanglements,"* Monash wrote.

Monash saw artillery as a piece of developing technology which could provide: a wall of steel which the infantry could advance behind (the moving barrage); a device for shattering the barbed wire entanglements in front of the enemy positions; a means of cutting communication cables; a suppression device to keep enemy heads down so that they would have difficulty engaging his advancing infantry; and a means to destroy or severely hinder enemy guns. And it was not just the artillery which Monash included in his thinking; the newly arrived aircraft and tanks were included in the equation.

Prior to this, artillery was used generally to suppress enemy trenches and guns. The remainder of the benefits foreseen by Monash were not employed. Monash wanted his force *"... to advance under the maximum possible protection of the maximum possible array of mechanical resources, in the form of guns, mortars, aeroplanes (also tanks); to advance with as little impediment as possible; to be relieved as far forward as possible of their obligation to fight their way forward."* Monash wanted his soldiers to march onto the appointed goal or line. Then they would be important in holding and defending territory gained – *"and there to gather the fruits of victory in the form of prisoners, guns and stores"*. 'Holding

and defending territory gained' – by the infantry - was doctrine for both world wars and Korea, but it did not apply in Vietnam.

Australian Army Doctrine on Artillery

In the 60's and 70's, the role of artillery was to support other arms and services. This was achieved by establishing fire supremacy in the battle area and in Phuoc Tuy Province, this was a given. The VC had access to 60mm and (sometimes) 82mm mortars, with some basic rockets. The NVA had access to all of the VC weapons, plus the occasional field gun of WW2 vintage. The weapon of choice, for both VC and NVA was primarily the RPG-7 (Rocket Propelled Grenade) with some RPG-2 rockets. These were light, man-portable, easy to operate and carried a powerful destructive force.

In carrying out their role, the gunners provided the firepower to support the commander's plan, while locating artillery acquired enemy mortars and guns for attack by our own artillery. The firepower available for the initial deployment of 1RAR was 161 Bty (RNZA), followed soon after by 105 Bty RAA; both batteries were equipped with the 105mm L5 Howitzer. When the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) deployed to Nui Dat, HQ Bty 1st Field Regiment and 103rd Field Battery joined with 161 Bty and 105 Bty to form the close support regiment for 1ATF.

By the time of the Vietnam deployment, the doctrine on the allocation of guns was one battery per battalion. With the deployment of 1 Fd Regt of two Australian batteries, plus one New Zealand Bty to complete the regiment, there were sufficient guns to allocate one per battalion for the (eventual) three battalions deployed. With a headquarters and headquarter battery to manage the administration, logistics and operational aspects (the FSCC), the CO was free to accompany and advise the TF Comd on artillery aspects. *"It was the first step in the modern practice by which artillery commanders place themselves at the headquarters of the unit being supported."*^x Similarly, the battery commanders placed themselves with the HQ of the supported battalion, and forward observers work with the company commanders.

The allotment or grouping of artillery assets accords with the doctrine of the time – one close support field regiment and one TF Artillery Intelligence Office per Task Force. Possible additional groupings or allotments included general support field and medium guns, a survey section, a sound ranging troop, a mortar locating radar section, an artillery intelligence office and a meteorological section^x. This additional support was provided by Det 131 Div Loc Bty, naturally with the exception of the general support field and medium guns, and the meteorological section, all provided by the US Army.

In the early days of the deployment, 1ATF was supported by up to six batteries of US medium and heavy guns. For example, during Operation Portsea (Mar 67), five batteries of guns were surveyed:

- Battery of guns from 11th Armoured Cavalry Regiment, US Army;
- 161 Field Battery RNZA;
- Battery of 155mm guns from 2nd 35th Bn, US Army;
- Battery of 2 x 175mm guns and 2 x 8 Inch guns from 1st 83rd Bn, US Army; and
- 101 Field battery RAA.

By the final year of the Vietnam deployment, the regular allotment of US guns to 1 ATF was one battery of 155mm medium guns, with the ability to call on US guns in neighbouring provinces, so long as they were available and within range.

Deployment of 161 Field Battery RNZA

The decision by the New Zealand government to deploy 161 Bty was announced on 2 June 1965. The battery had a number of problems to solve, and the first was that 161 was a composite regular/reserve battery. *"As 161 Battery was the only sizeable regular unit in being in the country, its commitment ... was a logical decision."*^{xi} Initially, the contingent was envisaged as the model drawn up for service in Borneo – a four-gun battery of 89 personnel. This proposal was met with much opposition, but when the government announcement came, there it was ... the Borneo model.

Supporting the four-gun proposal were: the need for financial constraints; the view that if four guns were good enough for Borneo, then it was good enough for Vietnam; and unfortunately, an Australian Report which stated that the airborne force they were joining (173 Abn) was organised with four gun batteries – the precedent. (161 Bty departed with 4 guns and a spare, which was quickly put into the gun line.)

To flesh out the reformed 161 Bty, volunteers from other Corps were called upon. On deployment, about 50% of the battery were gunners and the remaining non-gunner personnel were placed in positions where an intimate knowledge of gunnery was not essential.

The battery was mobilised following the government's announcement on 2 June, and the Advance Party, commanded by Battery Captain (BK) CAPT Murray Conner, departed on 5-6 July 1965. They were accompanied by a team of Engineers who helped prepare the gun position and accommodation for the main body. Obviously better prepared than the Australian gunners, tents were erected, floor boards installed and even a few beds were found for some of the tents. On completion of the task, the non-combatant Engineers went home. The Main Body deployed by Hercules aircraft between 15 and 23 July. After refuelling in Port Moresby, the C130H Hercules flew direct to Bien Hoa.

Of concern to many was the requirement for married soldiers to complete a seven to ten-month tour, while single soldiers would be required to serve an 18-month tour. Additionally, individual personnel would be replaced on a trickle system, something which later Sergeant Major of the Army, WO1 Macown said *"... did not have the support of the men. We would*

lose members of the unit for up to seven days whilst awaiting replacements. This provided added strain especially during operations and we never really solved this area of discontent."

Logistic support to the NZ forces was provided by a four-part financial agreement with Australia, which covered everything:

- *"The New Zealanders would use the Australian Logistic system in Vietnam to the maximum;*
- *There would be maximum standardisation of equipment;*
- *Equipment would be replaced by identical or Australian equivalent items; and*
- *The Australian Task Force would maintain New Zealand V Force in all items of equipment."*

Deployment of 105 Field Battery RAA

1RAR had arrived in South Vietnam on 10 June 1965, accompanied soon after by 161 Bty RNZA in mid to late July. The battalion and battery were attached to the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) (173rd Abn), and under command of the Brigade. In other words, 173rd Abn had the power to use the Australian forces as they wished, with the proviso that the Commander of Australian Forces Vietnam (COMAFV) could veto any decision which he thought was not in Australia's interests. **(Need a Ref here)**

In August 1965, with approximately three weeks' notice, it was further announced that an Australian Artillery Battery (105th Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery) (105 Bty) would depart for Vietnam in September 1965. 105 Bty was under the command of MAJ Peter Tedder and was based at Wacol, Brisbane. The battery was also placed under command of 173rd Abn.

The problems of preparing a field battery of personnel for overseas service were exacerbated by the need to prepare and take absolutely everything with them. All their equipment, stores, guns, vehicles, spare parts, repair systems, administration, personnel records and so on, had to be readied for movement. Not only were they to be prepared for movement, they had to be tested as 'fit' for overseas service; much of the equipment was not 'fit'. For example, 105 Bty had to replace all except three of their Landrovers. Following the deployment of 1 Fd Regt in 1966, gunner units to follow had only to prepare their personnel and records for overseas service. Their guns, equipment, vehicles, etc were waiting for them in-country.

Preparation of the soldiers of a battery for overseas service is no different to that of any other type of unit. The differences in the preparation of artillerymen lay in the preparation of equipment, in particular the guns. If unit training in Australia for the period 1953 (post Korea) to 1965 (pre-Vietnam) had allowed for regular checks of equipment and replacement of obsolete equipment, then the preparations for 105 Bty could have been much simpler.

The guns, for example, had not been recently calibrated, meaning that their muzzle velocities were not known with any degree of precision. As a general rule, the greater the wear on the barrel of a gun, the slower would be the projectiles in flight, and the less would be the range achieved. Not knowing the effects of barrel wear on the flight of the projectiles, and hence the muzzle velocities, meant that the gunners could not make allowance for the differences in muzzle velocities between guns. The result was a wider spread of projectiles on the ground at the target, and therefore a reduced effect on the target. The aim was to have all six guns of the battery fall together, within reason, producing a much more destructive effect on the target.

Equipment problems aside, the preparation of a battery of gunners is still time consuming. To reach Draft Priority 1 (DP1) standard involved an array of activities: medical checks, fitness checks, dental checks, zeroing of rifles, grenade practices, numerous inoculations against disease, Q Store issues and replacement of unserviceable personal equipment. Then there were lectures on the Geneva Convention, the Code of Conduct, security, health and hygiene, and document checks to be completed.

There was instruction on a new Radio recently purchased by Army, the AN/PRC 25 (the '25 Set'). Compared to previously used sets, which involved days and weeks to become proficient, this was a signaller's dream; insert a battery, screw on the antenna, attach the handset, turn it on, set the frequency on a dial and speak; end of instruction. While the initial models of the 25 Set were lacking in range, later models, with amplifiers, were a world apart from the radios they replaced.

While DP1 checks were progressively conducted, battery personnel loaded stores onto vehicles, marked vehicles for embarkation, and then checked loads for correctness and completion. Vehicles were then moved from the concentration area to the transit area, ready for loading onto HMAS Sydney. This occurred between 11th and 14th September. Interspersed with all the preparations, most soldiers were given seven days Pre-Embarkation Leave. On completion of Leave, the battery was ready to embark for overseas service.

At 0600 hours on 14 September 1965, all ranks less the Advance Party departed 4th Field Regiment Wacol for embarkation commencing at 0730 hours. With embarkation complete, HMAS Sydney sailed at 1100 hours and was joined the next day by her escort ship, HMAS Melbourne. Meanwhile, the Advance Party comprising CAPT Bruce Stark (BK), LT Alan Hutchinson (FO), WO2 James (BSM) and SSGT Croot flew to Vietnam to prepare the reception for 105 Bty.

For the next 13 days, the battery personnel fitted in with the ships routine, and conducted a strenuous training program; this was far from a pleasure cruise to sunny South Vietnam. With 35-40 minutes' periods, the training covered physical

and recreational training, language lessons, lectures from the Padre on the philosophy and history of communism, further medical inspections, battery training, intelligence briefings, mine training with the Claymore and a church service on 18 Sep. Training commenced at 0915 and ceased at 1600 hours. There was to be a short period each day where soldiers were allowed to take off their shirts for sun-tanning.

Live firing of small arms took place from the rear of the ship. Balloons were inflated and dropped overboard. When a suitable range was reached, firing commenced. There was a range of knockout competitions, a boxing competition, volleyball, hockey, tours of the ship, a firepower demonstration from the escort ship, slide shows (on Vietnam), currency to be changed, knots and splicing training, vehicles to be started, batteries to be charged, tyre pressures to be checked, and the obligatory defaulters parade for those minor misdemeanours. Soldiers were permitted to sleep on deck every second night. The convoy reached Subic Bay, in the Philippines, on overnight 25/26 Sep 65.

ON 28 Sep 65, HMAS Sydney anchored two miles off shore from Cap St Jacques and commenced to disembark troops and equipment, to a fleet of US landing craft, which ferried them ashore. From Vung Tau, 105 Bty was airlifted to Bien Hoa by US C130 Hercules and went into a position occupied by the Advance Party. On 29th and 30th stores and equipment continued to arrive by US C130 aircraft from Vung Tau; tent poles had not arrived so the soldiers were sleeping under shelters individual^{xii}. 1 RAR and 161 Bty had already been in-country for three months and were well established in their positions, as part of 173rd Abn at Bien Hoa.

On 1 Oct, the first delivery of ammunition arrived from 3rd Battalion 319th US Artillery, and on the 2 Oct, the first Australian round was fired by BRIG Jackson, Commander Australian Army Force Vietnam (COMAAFV). There followed a day of firing harassing and interdiction missions, and the first observed mission for the battery was fired by the Battery Commander (BC) on 4 Oct. Twelve days later, the battery fired their 1000th round on active service. Australian Gunners were at war, albeit an undeclared war.

(The Commander's Diary for 105 Bty does not show any sign of stress or strain in the preparations for overseas service; but they were there. Need to talk to the people of 105 Bty to flesh this out) (Tedder, Hutchinson, Stark (2))

Deployment of the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF)

The Task Force was warned for movement on 10 Mar 66, and included Headquarters Australian Armed Forces Vietnam (HQAAFV), a Headquarters for the Task Force and AATTV personnel, together with a host of units listed below.

This Warning Order authorised the preparation of 4057 personnel for Operational Service, and included half an APC Squadron, a Field Regiment RAA (minus), a Detachment from the Divisional Locating Battery, two Signals Squadrons, two Infantry Battalions, a Field Squadron RAE minus, a Construction Squadron RAE minus, one SAS Squadron, an Independent Reconnaissance Flight AAAC, a Field Ambulance minus, a Field Workshop Stores Section RAEME and a Field Workshop (Type A) RAEME, as well as many minor units.

The following Gunner units and personnel numbers were warned for service in Vietnam:

1 Fd Regt less one battery	203
Det 131 Div Loc Bty	67
1 Fd Regt Light Aid Detachment	16
Det 131 Div Loc Bty Wksp	5

There was to be no movement before 14th April 1966.

1st Field Regiment

Following the operational deployment of 105 Bty in October 1965, 1st Field Regiment RAA (1 Fd Regt), under the command of LTCOL R M C Cubis MVO, commenced preparations for overseas deployment. This was done on the hunch of the Commanding Officer. The Regiment had:

"... prepared a Mounting Instruction; prepared written indents for all stores required; instituted a thorough and comprehensive dental and inoculation programme in Oct 65; reposted eligible soldiers into the jobs they might expect to do in an operational theatre; and, above all, fought to get the Regiment away from time wasting and fruitless barracks commitments in order to carry out some battery and regimental training. Psychologically, we were prepared; the Commanding Officer had publically (sic) warned every soldier in Jan 66 that it was his opinion that we would be in VIETNAM in May."

On 8th March 1966, LTCOL Cubis was notified to expect a Warning Order soon for the deployment of the Task Force to South Vietnam (SVN). The following day, after a conference at Headquarters 1st Task Force, the Prime Minister addressed the nation advising of an increase in Australia's commitment to Vietnam, and the CO then addressed the entire Regiment to inform them that the Headquarters, Headquarter Battery and 103rd Field Battery (103 Bty) would soon deploy to Vietnam. On 10th March 1966, the Regiment received, by signal, the Warning Order for operational service in South Vietnam. Deployment of the Task Force to South Vietnam was known by the codeword HARDIHOOD. On 14th March, the Regiment received the authorised Organisation and Equipment Table plus changes to the Order of Battle (ORBAT).

On 15th March, the Regiment was scheduled to be part of the Staff College demonstration, which included, *"Stage management, rehearsals, preparation of stands, survey, catering arrangements, sign posting, printing of programmes and registration, all proceeded as planned by Maj Don Quinn."* (Maj Don Quinn (BC 107 Bty)

While all went well with the demonstration:

"The Commanding Officer wishes to record in this diary his opinion that ... Demonstrations tend to waste soldiers time, with little constructive result, and are economically preposterous. The rounds expended at the demonstration – about 450 at £60 a round (\$120) – could have been more usefully shot by the Regiment as part of their training ... particularly so when the regiment is about to go to war."

Clearly, LTCOL Cubis was neither smitten by Staff College demonstrations, nor their apparent waste of £27000 (\$54000).

Demonstrations aside, other problems began to arise for the Regiment. It would seem that Canberra (the Military Secretary) was not cognizant of the imminent departure of the Regiment for Vietnam; Posting Orders for the 2IC MAJ Arthur McDermott, BC 103 MAJ Neville Gair, BK 103 CAPT Ross Buchan, and Sect Comd 103 2Lt? Dean were not cancelled but allowed to proceed. The CO made representation to the TF Comd who spoke to the GOC E Comd, MAJGEN C B Daly CB DSO. As a result, all Postings were cancelled with the exception of CAPT Buchan, to AATTV. On 31 March, the following officers marched into the Regiment from the School of Artillery Basic Officers (Fd) Course: LT Doug Hazelwood (RMC), LT Pat Thorne (RMC), 2Lt Greg Cadman (OCS), and 2Lt M???? J Gallagher (OTU). Gallagher was the first National Service Officer to serve in 1 Fd Regt. **Is it possible to include Christen names?**

The School of Artillery and the Directorate of Artillery appeared more in touch with the recent Warning Order, and its implications, with the acceptance of 11 Gunners on the Advanced Battery Surveyors Course, and 14 Gunners on the Advanced Artillery Signallers Course on 16th March. In the next few weeks there would be many changes in personnel, resulting from DP1 checks and the operational requirement to have qualified personnel filling all the jobs on the unit establishment. These changes included personnel from both 102 Bty and 107 Bty, both of which were part of 1 Fd Regt at Holsworthy, but were not yet scheduled to go to Vietnam.

By 20th March, the soldiers of the regiment had worked every day since 17 Jan 66, with the exception of two Stand-Down days at Tianjara. With one last fire and movement exercise (Vitellius), completed on 21-24 Mar, the regiment was now left with the tasks of personnel preparation and packing of vehicles and equipment for shipment. Only two more Stand-Down days were able to be programmed before pre-embarkation leave for the regiment commenced. On 28 Mar, WO1 A J Sneddon marched into 1 Fd Regt as RSM.

Mention of leave, pre-em, etc???

HMAS Sydney departed on 22 Apr with vehicles, guns and stores for the regiment. With 19 x ¾ ton Landrovers of various type and 12 x ½ ton trailers, all loaded with stores, the total weight was 137 450 pounds (62 477 kg). The six x 105mm L5 Howitzers weighed 17 490 pounds (7950 kg). The guns, vehicles and stores were accompanied by the ship-borne advance party of CAPT Ian Darlington, LT Kerry Mellor with 20 drivers and limber gunners who would maintain the guns and vehicles during the voyage and be on hand to unload and drive the vehicles at Vung Tau.

Probably worthwhile to ask Jim Townley about preparation of the Loc Det, Keith Ayliff and Roy Clausen may be able to add information

Also on HMAS Sydney was Det 131 Div Loc Bty personnel commanded by CAPT Jim Townley and numbering 19 all ranks. Their 12 x ¾ ton vehicles and 12 x ½ ton trailers, carrying two x AN/KPQ-1 Radars, weighed 58 200 pounds (26490 kg) with 4240 pounds (1927 kg) of stores. Together with the 1 Fd Regt equipment and stores, the gunners had loaded almost 100 tonnes of equipment onto HMAS Sydney, without any ammunition.

On arrival in Vung Tau on 5 May, the ship-borne advance party was met by the advance party which flew by Qantas-hired Boeing 707. Together they totalled 3 Officers and 61 Other Ranks. The remainder of the regiment and Locating detachment personnel flew into South Vietnam over the next eight days, on four different flights. The size of these four groups had changed 5 times in the last 10 days prior to departure, with each change demanding the preparation of new nominal rolls – a very frustrating time for the main body.

The gunners were allocated an area about 1 km from the Airport, *"... in a less than desirable neighbourhood ..."*, with the local Police Training College, an ARVN paramilitary camp, a cemetery and a petrol dump as neighbours. The petrol dump contained some two and a quarter million gallons of fuel (about eleven million litres), of some concern to the regiment. At one point, *"The Premier of South Vietnam, Marshal Ky passed with a large escort and returned the salute of the troops who were called to attention."*

The area was extremely tight, with Stand-To looking like the trenches of France; soldiers were shoulder to shoulder. *"RVN personnel, both military and police, frequently move along the road bordering the camp, and recruits from the Police Training College come to the outskirts and wave to us in a friendly manner while they micurate (sic) (= urinate) against the wire."* Not only that, but, *"The proceedings were watched with apparent pleasure by a large crowd (sic) of Vietnamese."*

The practice of observing Stand To, held at dawn and dusk, was for several reasons: it marked the change from day-to-night and night-to-day routine; administrative checks were conducted on personnel and equipment including the administration of Paludrine (an anti-malarial medicine); and it was considered the most likely time for an enemy to attack; the soldiers at 'Stand To' would be ready

The CO was concerned about the security of the base, and the chances of being mortared; he wanted some counter battery capability. Following negotiations with the Airport, an area to the north was designated a free fire zone and three guns were brought into action (there was no room for more guns). However, when it was discovered that the ARVN paramilitary was setting ambushes in that area, and the CO had some serious concerns about the validity of clearances given by the airport, the free fire zone was cancelled. The three guns were stood down.

On 22 May, both Mortar Locating Radars became operational and were brought into action in the regimental area. Neither of the radars had travelled well on the sea voyage and it had taken some time to bring them to an operational condition.

Summarizing the problems encountered with such a short time between warning order and departure, even with the punt of the CO. Put these all together.

Despite being the second gunner unit (following 105 Bty) to depart for Vietnam, the timeframe from Warning Order to Departure for the Task Force was a mere eight weeks. That the Army managed to prepare, equip, and organise 4000 odd personnel, with all of their equipment, for overseas service in a matter of eight weeks is little short of miraculous. While the problems of 1 Fd Regt and Det 131 Bty preparing for overseas service seemed huge, they represented just 7% of the total force departing in May 1966.

All of these units wanted the new AN/PRC – 25 Radio sets, they all wanted more metal trunks for their soldiers, more and better vehicles to replace the worn out Landrovers and Trailers which they had, more and better tents to replace the WW2 canvas which had been rotting in Q Stores, and they all needed full medical and dental checks to ensure their fitness for duty. Uniforms and new boots were also part of their demands.

The requirement for the administrative paperwork to support such a move was vast: indents for stores to raise the holdings to war-footing scales of issue; instructions for soldiers movement to Canungra, for jungle training, and return; sorting through soldiers eligibility for service in Vietnam; instructions to vary the existing chain of command; Quartermaster Stores problems caused by the split of the regiment; planning lists for the movement of personnel as Advance Parties, Main Body and Rear Parties, were all part of the mire of paperwork with no computers or word processors. All of the paperwork had to be typed onto Gestetner Sheets and then hand printed and stapled.

And yet, despite their herculean efforts, not all the things which should have been completed were completed. For the gunners, one of those things was critical to their provision of fire support to the infantry and others. Artillery pieces are technically demanding beasts, and to be most effective at the target, the projectiles (rounds) from the battery of six guns, need to fall together – within a certain distance of each other in order to gain maximum effect. They need to have a large degree of predictability. Calibration of the guns (mentioned in the 105 Bty section), would have added to the predictability considerably, but, like the 105 Bty guns, this was not carried out on 103 Bty guns.

Sadly, calibration was a very costly exercise (in ammunition) in the 1960's prior to Vietnam, and so was rarely completed. The guns left for Vietnam without the ability to 'shoot together' and this was to have a major impact on the provision of support; it remained one of the gunner's most vexing problems for most of the war. In ?, an electronic system had been introduced to service, and this led to a quick and easy form of Calibration.

Consolidation at Nui Dat – to follow

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- ¹ AWM95, Item 3/5/29, Commander's Diary 105 Field Battery RAA, 23 Aug – 30 Sep 1965
- ¹ AWM – 1Fd Regt Diary – location on arrival Vung Tau????????????????

The book continues next month with “Chapter 2 – Chain of Command”.

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

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) –

“With the help of a Queensland Senator, military lawyer and a strong advocate (Retired Lt Col & Vietnam veteran) I have asked the new Minister for Veterans’ Affairs for his office staff to arrange a three-way phone hook-up. I think this is the best approach to talk the matter through without having an email exchange.

The new Minister has the appeal submission plus a list of four pages of politician’s names from all parties plus ESOs and senior community figures.

See how we go.

Richard. OAM”

Paul Dickson

“Nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

Mail Call...

. Vic Danko – sent in the following interesting “experience” –

“Hi Gents,

You might want to share this story in our book of experiences.

The receipt below is just the link to this fellow who owns JB Tours etc in Honolulu.

Paul may want to make contact and ask further questions etc. But in any event the contact is for authenticity etc.

Here is the story:

A couple of weeks ago Katya and I did a 2-week holiday in Hawaii. On one day, we took a hire car (JB) out to the countryside.

The driver was a pleasant, articulate chap.

On the way back, I asked him where he was originally from. He replied Vietnam But now California.

He added that his father had owned a construction company based in Saigon. This was 1960 - 70 's.

In 1974 - 5 this fellow (JB), turned 18 yrs of age and was scheduled for conscription (no exemptions).

His father said no way and told JB to flee into the forest with others.

He was there for some time whilst his father arranged for a boat to be built, somewhere south.

Eventually, they departed in a boat, he says, about the length of a bus. 16 persons (all relatives). But not the mother or father - 14 males and 2 girls, 12 yrs, cousins. Their destination was the Philippines.

Some days later they approached an island and they knew it was Chinese controlled.

As they approached the Chinese opened fire and a number in the boat were killed, including one of the girls. JB was shot. They then drifted away, and drifted, he said, for several weeks.

A US patrol boat approached and transferred the survivors to Guam and eventually the US.

So there ... I've never read a story about the boat people from their side.

On Saturday, I leave for 2 weeks in Vietnam. Starting in Hanoi. Regards.”

. Eddie Tricker – has a memory of the “Moratorium” era -

“Thanks Paul,

In addition to the Moratorium marches across Aussie, particularly Melbourne, (I was on Pre-em leave) remember Kent State, where US National Guard troops opened fire on University students.

Kind regards

eddie t.”

Responses with regards to David Dougherty's "365 Days in SVN" in last month's *Eyes & Ears*...

. **Bob King** – adds a comment to the article submitted by **David Dougherty** in last month's edition re: Conscripts etc options to serve in SVN –

"Hi Paul,

Re Conscripts posted to Vietnam. I was called to the RAP one day (Holsworthy) and was informed by the Doctor that I would not be posted to Vietnam because of the acne I had on my face.

I did want to volunteer to go. As a result, I had to sign that if my acne got any worse while I was in Vietnam I would not blame the Army. If my acne was on my back at that time I would definitely not go.

Regards,
Bob King."

. **Bob Billiards** – follows on from Bob King above with a response to David Dougherty's "Volunteering topic..."

"Paul,

Just reading through the E's and E's today as it is very cold and winter is certainly upon us so no model flying or working in the garage.

There were a few of 131 members straight out of recruit training and doing a couple of specialist courses at the North

Head school. Around the end of our Advanced Sig course after 3 months there 😊 Ian Amos and maybe 3two or 3 others were called into the school CO's office where we were told that the CO 131 had finally caught up with us and needed 2 volunteers to go to SVN. We were given the night to think about it and had to report the next day

with our answers. I can't remember exactly the conversation but it was that 2 of us might have been volunteered 😞. In the meeting the following day I said that I didn't really mind if I was chosen as someone being needed from this group but didn't say Yes but a tacit yes. Glad, I implied I would go as I wouldn't have the great lifelong friends I have now (would have had a different lot) and just being at Holsworthy for the very short time I was, I am glad even though I lived off the base. Not sure I could put up with the BS of the then army. It wasn't too bad for the 6 weeks I had to spend at 12 Field Regiment as the "Runner" and worked for Vic Moreau and made morning and afternoon teas for the CO and RSM. So, an easy job and finishing the week before Christmas.

Interesting feeling when I got home as it was different to wanting to go home. In SVN the orderly staff couldn't find the "Application for Resignation" forms so my feelings were that I really "wanna get outa this place" and a couple of days after RTA I felt bad about not being back with my mates left in SVN and having at some stage to having to go back to my Accounting course and the mundane clerical job at Fairfield Municipal Council. I did enjoy to getting back to racing Go karts again and being a lot more aggressive to winning a couple of national titles (sprint and road racing) and club

champion in my class. 😊

In all I guess that I volunteered and Ian Amos was the other volunteer all based on our placings in the basic SIG course.

Regards,
Bob"

. **Kevin Browning** – adds to this discussion in his invaluable meticulous way –

"Hi Paul,

Thanks for another excellent *Eyes and Ears*. I saw the article you wrote on Detachment members who served more than 365 days in a single tour.

One of the OC's or Det SM might be in a better position to explain if there was an official reason for those serving more than 365 days. But, my understanding is it stemmed from the problems caused by the initial rotation of Detachment members. At that time, there was a delay in the arrival of the replacements for those members who had already left.

Some of the Pioneers who did the full 365 days can tell you how dire matters were.

As a result, I believe the policy was brought in that you would not leave until it was confirmed your replacement was on the manifest of the incoming flight. Basically, this meant only about a day's notice. I can vouch for this as I was due to return to Australia on 17 September 1969, had tickets to my local football clubs ball and more importantly to the Rugby League Grand Final. Had my bags packed when the DSM called me in to tell me I wouldn't be leaving – no replacement on the manifest. Must have made a real pain in the neck of myself for next week I came home and still no replacement. He arrived a week later.

I had a look at the Detachment Operational Reports. The one for Apr '67 included:

'Relief

'11. Handover: The handover of the Detachment from Capt B L CAMPTON to Capt W R HAMILTON was smooth and Capt HAMILTON assumed command on the 24 Apr '67.

'12. The advance party was easily settled in and plans for the reception of the main body.....

'13. Great care should be taken in future [next line obscured] almost all of the Detachment left on the 27 and 28 April for RTA. The main body however does not arrive till the 5 May 67, excluding the Wksps and increment, there are 20 on the ground... This deficiency of 47 imposes a great burden on those left behind, and careful planning should be made to prevent a recurrence of this regrettable situation in the future.'

The June Report included:

'22. A proposed schedule for individual relief of the Det was submitted on 25 Jun. It is hoped that this shall make the maintaining of reliefs in Aust a little easier.'

There are several other mentions of replacement issues in subsequent reports and then in the Dec 67 Report:

'27. **Replacements.** The scheduled Nov draft for RTA departed here 11 Dec 67 and the scheduled Dec RTA draft departed on 12 Dec 67. So far all but one Bdr and two Gnr replacements have arrived. The system of notifying units when replacements are due to arrive has been under investigation by AFV and should improve considerably from now onwards.'

Regards,
Kevin."

Ed – Just as an addition to Kevin's RTA information, I couldn't help myself so had to have a look at more information – RTA's in December 1967 consisted of **21** members.

Arrivals in May 1967 – **43**. That's over half of the continuous permanent in-country manning of the Detachment.

Luckily, there were no major air transport mishaps with large numbers of us on the one aircraft at the one time.

It's also a real curiosity when you check Arrival/Departure dates on the DVA Nominal Roll and note that there are mates who were on the same flights as you and for some reason arrived/departed on different dates?

Ed...some general updates from mates –

. **Al Adams** – got some updates from an email – he's recovering from some recent illnesses (getting encouraging medical reports) and is in good spirits. Enjoyed catching up with Mike Butler as the "131 Twosome" on ANZAC Day. Family are well.

. **Vic Danko** – spoke to him via a WhatsApp call – he was in Hanoi cleaning his golf gear. He is well and possibly getting involved with some Aussie volunteers in a fresh water project. Family are all well.

. **Hilton Holloway** – adds some details in response to **David Dougherty's** article in last month's *Eyes & Ears* –

"Hi Paul.

Regarding the article about conscripts volunteering to serve in Vietnam –

After completing the Survey Course (5/70) at North Head I returned to 131 at Holsworthy and the very first thing that happened was being **told** that I was going to Canungra for three weeks' jungle training, then to Vietnam.

I don't remember being asked if I would "like" to go!

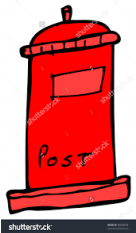
Keep up the great work.

Cheers

Hilton Holloway

PS. I served 314 days in Vietnam, not the 371 as listed in the table.

Ed – **Hilton, thanks for the PS – I have adjusted your service days in SVN in our archives.**



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...

. **Chris Bouilly** – "Hi Dicko,

Must apologise for being so long to reply to you. It's good to know that there is still a good number of 131 members still around and reading your newsletters everyone is looking fairly fit and well. I might add I was surprised to note Frank Pepper passing, I must have missed it along the line somewhere.

A quick up date from my part of the country...

We were finally removed from our property along side of EL Alamein Army Camp between Port Augusta and Whyalla, SA. It only took 19 years 11 months to finalise the compulsory acquisition. The Federal Gov't offered a valuation of 50% which only equated to land value, then we had to fight for the rest. Never want to see a Lawyer or Barrister again. We finally drew a line in the sand, my two sons and family had to get some money somehow.

I have 4 grandchildren one girl, qualified house builder, her brother is a diesel mechanic, both living in SA and have two other boys living in Qld. Eldest boy doing year twelve, into to his second year as a fitter and turner as well as riding a 450 cc en duro m/bike {comp}, and when he gets a bit of spare time rides bucking bulls and plays rugby. His brother is in year 10 and at this stage is interested in doing carpentry and playing rugby. Everybody in our family is doing something, except my good wife Vanessa and my good self-have slowed down, we have just bought a house boat on the River Murray, love the life. I'm concerned about how the current world is faring, sold my shares, put the money into a houseboat and if we ever get this Covid out of the way may get a chance to do a bit of travelling?

Down at Murray Bridge there is a great new horse race track and golf course which we both participate in. These days I only have a 5% share in race horses, that's enough.

I have a close mate that was in Vietnam, 108 Gun Battery next door to 32 Bravo. Bluey Nourse whom I have known since grade 3, he has just had a metre of his bowel removed, spent 13 days in ICU after having another op one day later because of an infection, flushed his internal insides, which was completely infected because the bowel had exploded. After the second op, they just kept him alive for four hrs in ICU. Nearly lost him. Returned home two days before Anzac Day and I spent the Anzac with him at his house.

I'm still involved with Legacy on Yorke Peninsular, joined in 1979 and just about ready to give it away soon.

I think I have chatted away long enough Dicko but without your effort in keeping everyone together we would all be worse off. I look forward to your letters. Keep up the good work. Cheers to all 131 ex diggers.

Chris Bouilly."

Ed – Some photos of you on board the "new floating home" would be great?

. John Vitkovsky – "Good morning Dicko,

Back after a few months? Where have you been?

Our only news is that the Resort has sold and settled. We have bought a place in Victor Harbor, S.A, on 2.5 acres just 5 minutes from town centre and beach. See pics. Will be quite a change from the bush life we have led for the last 27 years. Will miss picking up a gun and potting a rabbit for dinner out of our kitchen window... was in Adelaide not long ago at the markets and rabbits were selling for around \$30! Love them done in a camp oven.

We have also sold our property next door to the Resort which is coming up for settlement in August, so we are travelling back and forth getting the new place set up for the final move. They tell me that Victor Harbor is full of retirees and old farts ("God's waiting room"), so I guess I will fit in. And retire for the second time. Have two daughters and two grandkids in the Adelaide hills, so that will cut down the travelling. Will also miss having Rocklands Reservoir on our boundary as regards fishing, but will have to re-jig my gear for the sea.

Other than that, life's good and my PSA is 0.00, so it looks like the surgeons and oncologists know what they are about.

Regards, John."



. Ken Osborne – "Dear Paul,

Things have been very quiet of late for me. I am having trouble with my mobility so I am relying on the poor wife to do the shopping. There is no problem in driving, the problem starts when I get up on my feet that do not want to cooperate with the instructions I give them, so I really make use of a stick, but I will have to start using the walker I have been given to get around soon.

The weather here has not been conducive for getting out and around, so I have been trying to sort out a whole heap of postcards that I have been accumulating for a couple of years. I have been putting them aside to sort out on such an occasion and just did not realise how many had stacked up and how short I was of albums to put them in, but I am gradually getting on top of the task. Many of the cards I have bought on eBay, or from what I have picked up in op shops, so there is a great variety from lots of countries, so sorting them out takes time and a lot of consultation with an atlas.

Some of the cards nowadays are not the standard 4 x 6 so that creates problems for display or viewing, so with these I keep them in country or theme order and store in shoe boxes so I can get them out to view when I so desire. It all takes up space and time, have been at it for a fortnight now and just waiting on some new albums to arrive to finish the task.

This year I did not attend the ANZAC Day services or was involved in them for the first in just over thirty years. Our Sub-Branch continued in putting on its usual floral display, the central motif this year being the badge of the unit to which one of our past members was in when he was awarded the DFC in WW2. His name was Reg Sutton, was a Spitfire Pilot and his son gave the address at the service in his father's memory. Reg was the local chemist when I first came to Portland and besides being a staunch member of the Sub-Branch he was also a devoted Legatee, so I heard a lot of his exploits over the years that made you wonder how they ever got up the courage to do the things they did. So, will add the photos that I took later on ANZAC Day and one of the aerial view another photographer took. Again, it was the first time I had not been there during the march and service so the number of photos I took was down considerably.

I have found a couple of other photos of some Div Loc Bty members from 1967 doing the laundry run to Baria, one I know is Ray Hutchinson talking to a bunch of kids, who the others are I haven't a clue, I also need to get my old computer going to be able to scan the photos as it has gone temperamental on me at present but I think I know what the problem is so as soon as I fix it will scan and send them to you.

So, for now everything is going OK, not happy with the election results. I will be expecting some disastrous conditions being imposed on the general population while they try to implement some of their half-baked schemes to go carbon neutral and to resolve the problems with the NDIS as well as downgrading the VA's portfolio. Happy times ahead for us all, so keep smiling, Regards, Ken Osborne."



The following are some photos I took while in Vietnam that shows Ray Hutchinson and a couple of other blokes doing the laundry run to Baria,



The photo at right shows the lovely little building opposite the laundry pre-Tet



and another photo (at left) showing what was left of it after Tet, completely demolished. In the rubble, my radio mech Doc Pimm got very excited and said "come and look at this boss" and there sticking out of the rubble was a foot and part of the lower leg with a Viet Cong thong on it made from an old tyre. Doc Pimm always liked the macabre, did not turn me on at all, felt sorry for whoever it was under the debris.

Another photo shows the members waiting to do the lift of the ANKP1 by the Iroquois, Warwick Hamilton is second from left and the bloke in shorts is Fred Waters, no idea who the others are, maybe your viewers can help?

OK, got any ideas on the other blokes with Warwick? I think I know the well-dressed one Warwick's right!



. Peter Pioro – “Paul,

We have had a busy time this year and the freedom has allowed for some trips to relax. Our team now includes 4 in all with Ann and myself at Level 2 for Compensation and Welfare.

One qualified at Level 1 Compensation and now studying for Level 2.

One qualified at Level 1 Welfare and studying Level 1 Compensation.

The main issue is funding to manage the costs which are never ending.

Ann and I are in Coffs Harbour for a week. When back I am booked to see my Neurosurgeon for another back operation. After that, no more.

As you can see I have the OAM as does Ann for Service to Veterans and Veterans Families. It was announced at the Australia Day Awards 26 January 2022 and the investiture was 12 May 2022. It was a surprise to be nominated and awarded. I am told it takes 2 years from nomination to award if you get through.

I will do another From the Advocates Desk when back after this break.

You take care.

Regards,

Peter Pioro OAM.”

. John Richmond – “Paul

Nice to hear from u again

Looks like we are to get a real winter this year.

Just went down the road to get a couple of things, took the car rather than the bus

Normally I catch the bus. It's free for old "farts" like u and I, but, with a wind chill factor of -4 decide I didn't feel like waiting in the cold.

We are currently getting all the floor covering in house replaced (not my idea). The house is a shambles. Looks like we are moving (not that we are).

Again, we are still getting heaps of people falling foul to the dreaded Covit. Still carry a mask with me. Have to wear them on public transport.

Don't use or know how ZOOM works.

All the best, JR.”

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



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield

LSTAA AGM to be held 10am Thursday 21st July 2022

at HQ 20th Regiment or via Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85128969428?pwd=QXpOOTM2YStOR3NMOTZ5OVJ2bEiUUT09>

Meeting ID: 851 2896 9428 Passcode: 059268

Agenda:

- a. Call to order
- b. Quorum
- c. Minutes of previous meeting
- d. Correspondence
- e. Financial report
- f. Membership report
- g. Merchandise report
- h. Reunion summary
- i. Dissolve committee
- j. Elect new committee
- k. To receive and consider the statement which is required to be submitted to members under section 45 & 49 of the Fair Trading 2009 Act
- l. New membership initiatives
- m. New business- banner discussion
- n. Meeting adjournment

Maj Russ Hamsey

President LSTAA

. Grahame Dignam forwarded the following for perusal and there is a link at the bottom to click on for more pertinent information...



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

New Govt to hire more staff/other initiatives to address DVA backlogs.

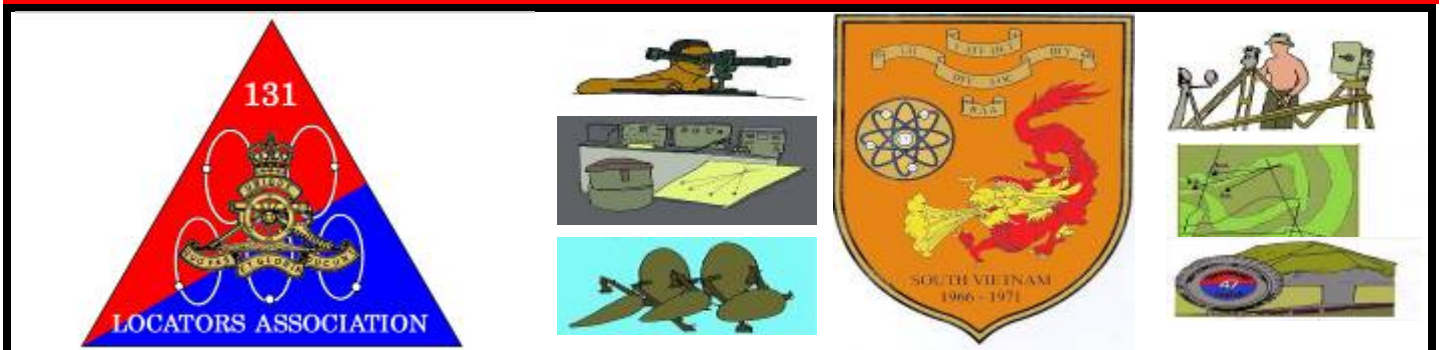
A key report into the Department of Veterans' Affairs' claims processing system has today been made public. Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh said the report found 37 initiatives which would improve the department's processes, reducing the wait times for veterans and their families.

"We must reduce this claims backlog," Minister Keogh said.

"It simply isn't good enough to have people who have put on a uniform and served our country wait for such a long time to access the support they are entitled to.

"I believe it's important to be accountable, and to get on with making positive changes as soon as possible – that's why I have asked the department to release the report publicly.

Click on link for the item in full: <https://www.contactairlandandsea.com/2022/06/24/30604/>



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>

A few well chosen words of wisdom form the Sec/Treas – 'A reminder from the Sec/Treas that you should check your emails in the next week as the reminders are being sent for ALL renewals that are due. If you get an email and wish to check your status please refer back to the Sec/Treas for confirmation **ALL CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE ENTERED INTO!!!**
G Dignam, Sec/Treas" Email sectreas131locators@gmail.com to check.

Presidential perambulations

It seems that air travel is now back. And in a big way if airport parameters are any sort of guide. Travel to Brisbane for the recent LSTAA reunion saw a Sydney airport time of about an hour to check my bag in, with a long queue then for security. However, for the return flight it was less than three minutes to check my luggage in and no long security checks. Last weekend my wife travelled to New Zealand for our daughter's birthday. Traffic to the airport was heavy and the queue for the domestic terminals was about 500 metres long and comprised two lanes.

But, pick up time was even more illuminating. Car park P7 had a short line of vehicles going in. On each level, there were no vacant parking spots until I reached level six, the top floor. There, fortunately, was a spot that I could use whilst other cars continued to circle looking for the same. Level 6 is so far up that the two levels below did not have escalators for the descent.

Inside the terminal, the crowd was impressive. The arrivals display was full and the rate of people exiting the secure area was slow. Eventually, there she was and it was now the challenge of getting back to car park level six. Driving out saw us join a long car line as we wound our way back to ground level. As we passed the vehicle line entering the domestic terminal areas on the opposite side of the road it was obvious that just as many people were trying to get into the parking and pick up areas as previously.

Regards

Allen

50 Years
April 1966 - April 2016



The Memories Remain
1966 - 1971



find us on

Facebook

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

ZOOM MEETING: Date: Tuesday, 14th June, 2022 at 1105hrs...

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

Attendees were:

Terry Erbs, Paul Dickson, Merv Nairn, Grahame Dignam,

Bert Blink, Gordon Malcolm, Allen Morley, Ian Campbell,

Ian Amos, Ernie Newbold and Ron Mason



Apologies: received from Steve Wynn, Bob Billiards, Ged Carroll, Kev Browning, Warwick Brooker, Nick Proskurin, Rieny Nieuwenhof, Laurie Sawyer, George Lane, other State Reps and Jim Fitzgerald

Financial Membership is currently ... **131**, plus Associates **2**, Affiliates **16**. Total **149**. Lapsed **34** members
Total **149**

Presidents report.

Allen referenced

- . The change of Banner from old to new for 131 has been approved
- . The final version of the proposed "Heritage " Banner incorporating all serving units of 20 Regt will be moved at the AGM on 21 July 2022. There will a choice of 3 to consider.
- . Due to circumstances this year the 131 Banner was not on Parade during the Anzac day March in Sydney. Efforts will be made to find a suitable storage point near the city centre where the banner could be stored rather than travel long distances on public transport with it.

. web Performance...

In Bob's absence, the Face book member's number are now 303. Bob advised he would be travelling home from the Gold Coast and apologized for his non-attendance.

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

Health Report:

- . John Vitkovsky has been able to sell his eco tourist site and has moved to Victor Harbour.
- . Peter Piro and ken Osborne have had some severe setbacks health wise recently. We wish them well.
- . A general discussion about health ensued.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

- . Stu Sporn called to enquire after a flag from Bravo Radar to which the soldiers manning the site added their signatures in 1967/68. There was a recollection that such a flag was encountered at North Fort when clearing out the artefacts prior to releasing the site to the Government Foreshore authority. After a millisecond, President Allen Morley reached into the first or second drawer of his desk and produces a flag very similar to aforementioned described and exclaimed "Is this it?" Stu (the original diner of the flag) asked for it to be returned to him as he wished to present it to the Darwin Military Museum for display.

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 12th July, 2022 at 1100hrs

Venue: to be advised

Also, available via Zoom link to be advised



. Birthdays in the Battery...July –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	STEPHEN FOWLER	217186	16 09 1968	17 09 1969	
2	PETER O'DONNELL Sgt.	213115	24 03 1970	05 11 1970	
3	BRUCE FOWLER	2795238	16 12 1970	29 07 1971	
4	GEORGE WEARN Capt.	2251140	05 08 1968	20 08 1968	133 Div Loc CMF
7	PETER JOSCELYNE	2792023	03 06 1970	17 12 1970	
12	NEVILLE ATKINSON	1733449	08 11 1968	05 11 1969	† 14.12.96
13	DEREK GRIFFITHS		N/a		† 02.04.05

10	BILL FINLAY Sgt.	37818	20 05 1966	01 05 1967	
10	ROBERT PELHAM	55342	16 11 1968	19 11 1969	
10	REX ARNOLD	424096	16 12 1970	29 05 1971	
	" "		29 05 1971	16 09 1971	Ind 161 Recce Flt.
11	JOHN JAGGARD	4721862	03 03 1971	02 08 1971	131
	" "		02 08 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
12	HARRY LYNUS	176377			
13	ALASDAIR GOUGH	2105130	27 03 1970	04 03 1971	
14	EDMOND DOUST Sgt.	53111	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	† 26.12.14
14	FREDERICK KRUMINK	6708867	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
15	IAN EARLE	3166824	19 08 1970	10 12 1970	131 / 4 Fd Regt.
	" "		11 12 1970	23 06 1971	33 Dental Unit
16	GEORGE ADDISON WO2	2410040	16 04 1969	16 04 1970	† 27.12.12
18	KEITH AYLIFFE Sgt.	217354	18 12 1967	03 12 1968	131
	" "		08 07 1971	24 07 1971	HQ AFV
18	ALAISTAIR McLEAN	312524	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	
18	JOE KOCKA	1202703	20 08 1970	29 07 1971	
19	MAXWELL McPHERSON	3795560	27 11 1969	05 11 1970	† 19.05.16
21	GRAHAM WILLIAMS	2789698	03 06 1969	25 03 1970	
21	WILLIAM SLAPE	44464	22 12 1969	17 12 1970	† 12.05.12
21	WILHELMUS Van ZETTEN	3794919	17 03 1970	17 12 1970	
21	PETER SUMMERS	3796803	09 11 1970	09 06 1971	
22	JOHN HOMER	5717596	17 03 1971	02 08 1971	131
	" "		02 08 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
22	THE EYES & EARS		1967	1967	
23	DAVID DODD	2790139	03 06 1969	04 06 1970	
25	WILLIAM DOYLE	4719912	17 12 1968	04 01 1969	4 Fd REGT
	" "		05 01 1969	28 11 1969	131 † 05.09.78
25	JOHN SMITH	610231	16 11 1968	12 11 1969	
25	PETER BARRY	2794949	17 03 1971	04 08 1971	131
	" "		04 08 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
28	MALCOLM MUSGRAVE	214359	03 06 1969	04 06 1970	
29	RICHARD EDWARDS	218595	03 06 1970	14 05 1971	
30	KEITH HOLLOWAY	15851	20 05 1966	10 10 1966	

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

Ed – 8 blokes not highlighted out of 26 represents almost 31% - what's that, almost 1 in 3 have not been Located? Crikey that's a heap. Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 172 and we've sent out 172. Ed – Maybe we need to draw in a deep one so as to hold our breaths for a while longer.

Locator Profiles – on the web site. There are numerous Locator Profiles on the website that don't feature head'n'shoulder photos, instead just have an Artillery badge – how about we get some of these replaced with photos?

. **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.



An apology, thanks to **Bob King** – the photo (at right) posted in last month's **Vale** for **Barry Fountain** was incorrect. It depicted Barry, but was actually **Vaughan Millar** – the photo was mistakenly extracted from Barry's archives.

Ed - Thanks Bob.





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

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

Hope we hear from you?

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

. Other related sites...

. 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/>

. **VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE** Website link - <http://www.dva.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx>

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

. **1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...**



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

It is also dedicated to those members of the 1/83rd who did not return. We will never forget their sacrifice.

Website: <http://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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

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