

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



Memorable Times for 131 in July...

8th, 2010 – Locators Association Inc

10th, 1952 - Establishment 131st Loc Bty 1954.

The battery was first raised in 1952 as

31 Battery and was re-designated as

131st Locating Battery on 10th July, 1954

22nd, 1967 – the first ever *Eyes and Ears*



RTA Project for 2022

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

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

1966 – Nil

1967 – Nil

1968 – Nil

1969 – Robert Gibson (late), Terrence Fox, Anthony Eaton

1970 – Dennis Malloy, Graham Greenland (late), Kevin Taylor

1971 – Mark Szypulski (late), Simon Willis, Bruce Fowler, Joe Kocka, Robert Harris, Wayne Jeffrey (late)

There are no archived photos available of any of the RTA's.



Give me a Name?

The “Lost Locator Project”

This Project is being re-ignited for 2022.

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

The list in last month's *Eyes & Ears* completed our year by year survey.

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 “Detachment Album Project”** – This project is sponsored by the 131 Locators Association and is in need of some photographic and by-line input from our members/Readers.



. Insights and Recollections...

This topic/s have raised so much interest – we're still in the middle of some really great discoveries with some remarkable memories being brought to life.

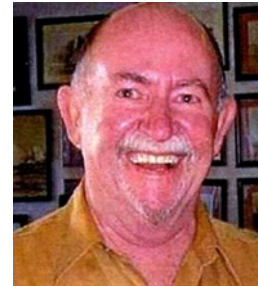
The series will continue on the receipt of more Insights and Recollections, so if you would care to contribute, please send your Insights and Recollections –

Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

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

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

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



By Jeff Evans

Edited by Paul Dickson
in conjunction with Kevin Browning,

Chapter 2 Chain of Command

The Headquarters for Australian forces was deployed to Saigon - Australian Army Force Vietnam (AAFV). For the complete force, including the Saigon element, the Command and Control structure was important. Command of the Battalion and Battery group was vested in the Commander Australian Army Force Vietnam (COMAAFV), BRIG O.D. Jackson. COMAAFV was also the commanding headquarters for the Australian Army Training Team personnel. Command is generally regarded as the authority to move and deploy forces, and the responsibility for Administration accompanies that authority. As the force was only Army at this stage, BRIG Jackson reported directly to the Chief of the General Staff, LTGEN Sir John Wilton, back in Australia.

The ANZ troops commenced arriving on 2nd June 1965, led by 1RAR on HMAS Sydney. 161 Bty deployed via Royal New Zealand Air Force C130 Hercules to South Vietnam, Bien Hoa, in mid-July. On arrival, 161 Bty was attached to 3/319th US Artillery Battalion, part of 173rd Airborne. They were placed under Operational Control of 173rd Abn, as were the Australian forces, and placed in Direct Support of 1RAR. (Direct Support to 1RAR meant that the priority of effort for 161 Bty was to be for 1RAR.) 161 Bty was equipped with the 105mm L5 Howitzer. 105 Field Battery (105 Bty), Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) arrived in September 1965, also equipped with 105mm L5 Howitzers.

A question arises; "Why did the Australian Government deploy 105 Bty when 161 Bty was already in theatre, in Direct Support of 1RAR?" **Question MAJ Tedder on this.**

Perhaps it was because 161 Bty initially deployed with 4 guns, and a spare. Perhaps the reason for the four-gun battery was the misinformation given the RNZA that US batteries comprised only four guns (this was true of the 175mm and 8 Inch gun batteries, but all other batteries comprised six guns). Perhaps it was governed by the regular manpower available to the NZ Army. In any event, within a year, the battery built up to six guns¹.

LTGEN Wilton placed the 1RAR Group, including the two gun batteries, under Operational Control of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). MACV was commanded by General William Westmoreland, who decided that (ultimately) all three ANZ units were to be attached to 173rd US Airborne Brigade (173rd Airborne) which was based at Bien Hoa, some 20 miles north west of Saigon.

In a visit to Vietnam to consult with the Americans, Wilton received an assurance that the Brigade Commander (173rd Airborne) would consult with the Battalion Commander of 1RAR before deploying on operations, and that the battalion

would have a degree of autonomy during operations¹. Wilton gave BRIG Jackson the power of veto for any operation which was not in Australia's interests.

The deployment of 1RAR and the gun batteries with 173rd Airborne Brigade saw both 161 Bty and 105 Bty rotate in and out of Direct Support for 1 RAR, and General Support for 173rd Airborne. This gave both batteries the opportunity to develop their working relationships with 1RAR, and also the opportunity to work within the American 'system', with scope for the forward observers to practice and further develop their skills.

The decision to deploy a force capable of operating independently was a basic tenet of LTGEN Wilton's from the first deployment. While the 1RAR group was operating with 173rd Airborne, LTGEN Wilton was looking for an opportunity for the Australian contingent to be in a position where they could operate independent of US Forces, and not be involved with US operations. Wilton '... did not want to place Australian lives at risk in more adventurous American operations.' He foresaw a large number of casualties if the Australian Task Force operated with the US Forces, and this was seen as unacceptable to Wilton, the Government and the public of Australia¹. The chance to operate independently came when the Australian force was expanded to a Task Force in mid 1966. The Task Force was given responsibility for Phuoc Tuy Province to the south east of Bien Hoa, as agreed with Westmoreland.

The selection of Phuoc Tuy province as the base for operations of the Australian Task Force further defined Wilton's aim of independence for the Task Force. The selection of Phuoc Tuy was based on its accessibility by sea and air, remoteness from Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam, the similarity of the terrain to that which Australians had trained and operated in previously, and the likelihood of being able to separate the enemy from the population. Furthermore, it allowed the Task Force to conduct counter-revolutionary warfare, as opposed to the American's approach of an offensive, firepower warfare, forcing the enemy to do battle.

The Task Force, known as 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF), deployed on 6 June 1966, was commanded by BRIG Jackson, who moved from Saigon to Nui Dat, and comprised:

One cavalry squadron

1st Field Regiment RAA (of two Batteries)

A Detachment of 131st Divisional Locating Battery RAA

One Field Engineer Squadron

5RAR

6RAR

An SAS Squadron

An Independent Reconnaissance Flight (Army),

No 9 Squadron RAAF, and

Sundry other Support elements.

Now that the Task Force was tri-service, Commander Armed Forces Vietnam (COMAFV) as he was now known, reported directly to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee. Promoted General in May 1966, and appointed Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, GEN Wilton remained in charge of the Vietnam force. Operational Control of 1ATF was given to HQ II Field Force Vietnam based at Bien Hoa, with Command remaining at COMAFV Saigon.

There is a coloured diagram of the 'chain of command' which I was given by Army History Unit – I just have to find it in my study, and then it can be included here, with some explanatory notes.

Chapter 3

Artillery Tactical Headquarters and The Fire Support Coordination Centre (FSCC)

The Artillery Tactical Headquarters (Arty Tac) originally evolved to perform the Operational Functions on behalf of the regimental CO, such that he was, "... free to accompany and attend the commander" (of the Task Force) (**Cubis Paper**). *"The adjutant ... retains the direct 'gun end' fire control of all batteries and produces Task Tables ..."* (a heavy commitment in Vietnam). (**Cubis Paper**) The Task Tables for both the CB Fire Plan at Nui Dat and the H & I program for the province were an onerous task. *"The adjutant's fire planning instructions came from Arty tac."* (**Cubis Paper**) At this stage the adjutant was an integral part of Arty Tac.

Clearly, Arty Tac, pre-Vietnam, was a construct based on a conventional warfare setting preceding the technological developments, especially air warfare developments, of the 50s and early 60s. The Vietnam setting was a world apart, and generally expanded the functions of a regimental CO, which, in turn, expanded the functions of Arty Tac and the adjutant. LTCOL Cubis, briefed by MAJ Peter Tedder who had been in Vietnam for nine months, realised that a new structure was required to conform with the US system and to 'manage' the safety aspects of the province.

The safety of ground troops was controlled by the level requesting the fire support; mortars or field guns supporting a company were controlled at the local level by the Coy Comd and FO, overseen by the Bn Comd and Bty Comd who have access to the wider picture. At the next level, a gun regiment of three batteries supporting a battalion (or sometimes less as in the case of Long Tan), the fire support was controlled at the local level by Bn Comd and Bty Comd, and overseen by the next higher HQ (Arty Tac at TFHQ), who again have access to the wider picture and much more information - restricted areas, no-fire zones, US friendlies in the next province, SAS patrols and so on.

Safety of own troops was therefore a bottom-up, escalating level of control, dependent upon the size of the operation. Furthermore, there was a requirement to obtain clearance when any target was within 1000m of a province boundary. This was the responsibility of the FSCC, to ensure the safety of troops operating close to the border areas, and required clearance from the FSCC in the neighbouring province.

Safety in the air – for ANZ troops - was the opposite to safety on the ground, with the FSCC broadcasting air warnings (by radio) to aircraft in or transiting the province. It was necessary to broadcast guns firing, helicopter gunships operating, close air support and the like to transiting aircraft. Why do this? Surely the aircraft could simply fly above (or below) the gun trajectories? For the unfamiliar, this may seem like an 'overkill', but the trajectories of ANZ artillery can easily reach 3000m (10 000feet), and up to 6000m (20 000feet) at maximum ranges. Some US guns had trajectory heights of 20,000m (66,000 feet).

So far as is known, there were no aircraft unfortunate enough to collide with an artillery shell in Phuoc Tuy province. Yet the author recalls a story told by MAJ Bill Smith, RAA, then 2IC at the School of Artillery, who, during his tour of Vietnam, had wangled a 'Liaison visit' to Da Nang airbase. Despite there being FSCC covering all the airspace in South Vietnam, MAJ Smith maintains there was a photograph on the wall, taken by one jet-jockey, of his wingman. Precisely at the time the shutter clicked, a red-hot eight-inch shell entered the frame, between the two aircraft, on its way to a target.

The firepower and air power available in Vietnam had to be experienced to be believed. MAJ Tedder wrote, "... " **(105 Report)** and a US subaltern explained that, " ... " **(from Appy I think)** In an example of the aircraft available, WO2 Keith Charlton explained that having been used to RAAF air training exercises, where two Huey helicopters would be tasked, to see 120 Huey lift the better part of a division, in one lift, was an awesome sight. **(WO Charlton)**

The regimental CO of 1 ATF still required the freedom to accompany the Task Force commander, and the adjutant retained the responsibility for the operational functions of the regiment. However, it was apparent to all that the additional responsibilities of the Vietnam air and ground safety environment demanded change in the form of the Fire Support Coordination Centre (FSCC). MAJ Neville Gair, BC of the newly arrived 103 Bty (???) in General Support of the Task Force, and an officer with considerable flying experience, was tasked to examine the composition, role and manning of the FSCC. **(Cubis quote on RAAF here)**

The newly formed FSCC comprised:

- The original Arty Tac to command and control artillery assets;
- The Artillery Intelligence desk from Det 131 Div Loc Bty to coordinate the locating assets of Radar and later, Sound Ranging and Sensors;
- Air Warning Control Centre (AWCC) of 161 Recce Flight to warn aircraft of gun and air activity in the province;
- A US Army Aviation Officer to coordinate USAF, South Vietnamese Air Force (SAF) and US Army aviation assets;
- A US Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer; and
- The manning which primarily came from the survey and signals sections of HQ Bty of the regiment, as well as the Artillery Intelligence section.

Under the guidance of Neville Gair, *"The BC HQ Bty (CAPT Ian Darlington) assisted by the IO (CAPT) and CAPT Jim Townley (the Artillery Intelligence Officer) by trial and error, common sense and initiative, ... and faithful to traditional gunner rules, designed an efficient, well-organised fire plan centre which ... eventually embraced all the tasks and responsibilities ... in the theatre and included many of the tasks normally exercised by the Divisional HQ RAA."* Both Darlington and Townley retained their administrative commands of HQ Bty and Det 131 Div Loc Bty respectively.

At a seminar at the School of Artillery in **(1993???)** Ian Darlington detailed the responsibilities of the FSCC as follows:

- Provision of artillery advice to the Task Force Commander and the Task Force Tactical Operations Centre;
- Command and control of Counter Battery fire;
- Provision of both air and ground clearances to fire;
- Broadcast of fire mission warnings on the AWCC;
- Command and control of Harassing and Interdiction programs; and
- To collect, compile and disseminate Artillery Intelligence.

¹ Newman. S. D. *Vietnam Gunners*. 1988. Moana Press, Tauranga, NZ. p21-23

¹ Horner, D., cited in *The Australian Army and the Vietnam War*, 2002, p36

¹ Horner, D., cited in *The Australian Army and the Vietnam War*, 2002, p40

Horner, D., *The Gunners*, Allen and Unwin, 1995. p480

Chapter 4

"10, this is 14, FIRE MISSION BATTERY, over"

"This is 10, FIRE MISSION BATTERY, out"

"14, Grid 123456, over"

"10, Grid 123456, out"

**And so, the fire orders proceed;
initiated by the forward observer, and
repeated back by the gunner command post signaller.**

No other words in the Army language command such an instant reaction from gunners as those two words, “*Fire Mission ...*” – the gun detachments stop every activity, except breathing, and bolt for the guns. The three words, “*Contact, wait out*”, were treated with the same reverence, but they were more of a warning, whereas “*Fire Mission ...*” is an order, and no order ranks higher to a gunner’s ear. It is primarily the first two words – ‘*Fire Mission*’ – rather than the third word(s), which could be ‘... *One Gun*’, ‘... *Three Guns*’, ‘... *Battery*’ or ‘... *Regiment*’. The level of support demanded is virtually irrelevant, to the gunner; it is the order to produce support which commands the instant response, with someone being in serious trouble and needing artillery support.

To every gunner, in every gun battery, the production of fire support as soon as possible and as accurately as possible is the only aim. Time and accuracy had to be in concert; one without the other was inevitably going to have a detrimental effect on the supported troops. This essential synergy of time and accuracy never seemed to make it into the minds of gunners from the US army. Their mind-set seemed to focus on mass firepower, at the expense of providing what the supported arm desired. During Operation Iron Triangle, Major Ian McFarlane, OC B Company, was scathing: “... *Arty (artillery) fire from US guns is too haphazard and inaccurate for even reasonable safety*”¹.

The gunner’s prime function in life is to provide fire support to those in need, generally the supported arm of infantry, but it could be any corps or any service. And at the gun position, the gunners do not question the authority of the originator of the ‘call for fire’; whatever is ordered is delivered. Gunner officers are trained to accept the orders of the ‘observer’, within reason. Everything stops to respond to the call for fire, and provide the required support. In the Vietnam era, Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand all operated in this way under International Agreements. The US artillery system was quite different in that the observer ‘requests’ fire support, and depending on the target description he provides, is given what the Gun Position Officer (in the US, the Fire Direction Officer) decides is appropriate.

One means by which artillery was able to operate in support of infantry patrolling outside the immediate vicinity of Nui Dat was through the establishment of Fire Support Bases (FSB). This was an independent location, away from Nui Dat, and, with few exceptions, staying within range of at least one other battery of guns. The FSB would generally comprise a battery of guns, the battalion mortar platoon and a protection party of infantry or cavalry. The location chosen was always a struggle between the infantry, who wanted to deploy into the tree line, and the gunners who needed to deploy away from the trees such that they could fire in any direction unimpeded.

A base may take two to three days to fully develop. First priority was to employ the bulldozer digging in the Command Post and building earth bunds around each gun. These bunds would then be joined to form an outer circle perimeter. Tons of defence stores would be delivered to the position, including barbed wire, sandbags, culverting for personnel pits and perforated steel plate (PSP) as a platform for the guns in the wet season. To add further depth to the protective boundary, anti-personnel mine, claymore mines, trip flares and Listening Posts would be emplaced.

Fire support bases could remain as centres for operations in a particular locale for months at a time and some, such as that at the ‘Horseshoe’, became permanent. Among the most well-known of many Australian fire support bases were those at Coral and Balmoral. Established in mid-1968 both came under heavy attack on several occasions. “*At Coral, for the first time since the Second World War, gunners had to defend their artillery pieces in close-quarter combat.*” (AWM website – see Ch 10 for ref)

Is this required or not??? “A fire support patrol base is a separately defended location set up temporarily to protect weapons systems, such as artillery and mortars, firing in support of infantry and armoured operations in the allocated area of operations (AO). A well-defended base may take a day to develop; guns, other weapons systems and defence stores would be airlifted in by Chinook and protection provided, usually by an infantry company, wire, sandbags, claymore mines, anti-personnel mines and bulldozed bunds or earthworks to protect weapons and crews. FSPB Coral (named after an Australian officer’s girlfriend) was the biggest to be occupied in South Vietnam by 1ATF, and the location allocated was a circle designated originally at around 500m in diameter.” PH p364

During its year on operations the 4th Field Regiment had fired 168,000 rounds.” **DH p485**

Geoff Grimach, 102 Bty, was not the only one to have his luck with the horses run out. SGT Terry waters and ? were running a ‘book’ in 19....., withBty. unbeknown to them, their Battery Commander, MAJ David Gilroy was also running a book. He discovered Waters and ‘book’, obtained the good oil on a particular horse, and through a number of ‘volunteered’ assistants, backed the horse heavily with Waters and The horse won and the Waters/..... syndicate were out of business, and broke. **(Interview Waters of 2011)**

Chapter 5

How the Gun Works

This still needs work, and a place to be inserted.

The Artillery Piece. To understand the complexity of arranging artillery to fire at a target, it is necessary to gain some understanding of the workings of artillery pieces, specifically, those guns which support the infantry in the ground battle,

and generally known by the terms Field, Medium or Heavy Artillery. To understand a gun in action, a simple analogy is the garden hose. Imagine watering plants in the garden with hose in one hand and the other hand on the tap. The hose has a nozzle and the nozzle is adjusted to a single narrow stream – the stream is the visible trajectory of the water being distributed to the garden.

Having watered one plant, you wish to water a plant which is further away without changing your position. This can be achieved by raising the nozzle of the hose, so that it sprays higher and therefore longer. Alternatively, the hose remains steady, but the tap pressure is increased; the increase in pressure will increase the range of the water spout, allowing the more distant plant to be watered without moving the nozzle of the hose. A gun reacts in exactly the same way; elevating the barrel will achieve a greater range, or, leaving the barrel stationary, but increasing the pressure (the amount of charge or propellant) will increase the range. The maximum range for either the water spout or the gun will occur at an angle of 45 degrees to the horizontal, a fact of physics.

Of course, if either hose options do not achieve enough 'range' to water the distant plant, the hose can be moved closer to the distant plant, just as a gun can be moved closer to the target. It follows also that if the next plant to be watered was to the left or right of the original, the hose can be turned left or right and again, a gun is no different.

If the plant to be watered is 'hidden' close behind a taller and closer plant, the nozzle can be angled up toward the vertical, above 45 degrees, such that the spout will go over the top of the near plant, and 'fall' onto the 'hidden' plant. An artillery Howitzer can do likewise, firing high into the air to avoid, for example, a hill or mountain between gun and target. Artillery Pieces which can fire above 45 degrees are called Howitzers; those which can only fire up to 45 degrees are simply called Guns. Both types of artillery used by the ANZ Gunners in Vietnam were Howitzers.

The greatest asset of artillery, be they guns or howitzers, is the ability to engage a target some kilometres away at say, 90 degrees, and literally a minute or so later, they can engage a target in a different direction – say, 180 degrees. Similarly, the guns of different batteries can be engaging their respective targets at one instant, and a minute or so later, all be engaging the same target together. Generally, the larger the gun, the longer it takes to move it to point in a different direction, but the firepower which can be brought to bear from widely dispersed gun batteries can be considerable, and the time frame to make this happen, is small – of the order of two to three minutes.

Range and Direction. When cannons and cannonballs were in use, the detachment firing the gun could generally see the target, and so could make any necessary adjustments to the firing gun so that the cannonballs (projectiles) would hit the target. From late in the 18th century, guns progressively achieved greater ranges, to the point where seeing the target, from the gun, was generally no longer possible. From this point onwards, it was necessary to employ an observer, who could see the target, identify its location, and pass this information to the guns. Coincidentally, there was a requirement for the gunners (at the guns) to calculate the location of the guns as accurately as possible, and from that information, calculate the range and direction to the target.

The locations of both guns and the targets, has been an ongoing problem for about 100 years, from the Boer War to the early 1990's. This was particularly so in the jungles of Asia, including Vietnam, where visibility varied from hundreds and sometimes thousands of metres, across paddy fields or open country, to only tens of metres in the jungle. The locations of gun and target were produced by various methods which will be described later.

The next problem is to calculate the range from the gun to the target. For range and direction (called the Bearing), the gunners needed maps which had a square 'Grid' placed over the topographical details of the map. Conventionally, the square Grid comprised squares of a ratio which were generally easily recognizable and allowed sufficient natural and artificial details to be printed onto the map so that the user could 'read' the details off the map and relate them to the ground. For example, maps of scale 1 inch to 1 mile were used pre-conversion to the metric system, and were replaced by 1cm to 1km (ratio 1:100 000), 2cm to 1km (ratio 1:50 000), in the metric system. The Grid Squares run east to west (Eastings) and south to north (Northings). Most operational maps in South Vietnam were 2cm to 1km, 1:50 000 scale. Having a location for both gun and target, selected from the Grid Squares of the map, it is relatively simple trigonometry to calculate the range and direction from gun to target.

However, simply knowing in which square the guns or the observer are located was insufficient accuracy for both parties; both guns and observer needed to know where they were in that Grid Square, to an accuracy of at least 100 metres for Eastings and Northings. Rarely did the observer know where they were with an accuracy of say, 100 metres, but the aim for the guns was to know their location to an accuracy of less than one metre for Eastings and Northings. To achieve this accuracy, Artillery Surveyors 'carried' survey from a point of known coordinates to the centre of the gun position.

The artillery gun or howitzer is subject to many 'system errors' in the delivery of a projectile over many kilometres, so the aim was to exercise great care with those things which we could control, to negate, as far as possible, those things which we could not control. Gunners thrive on accuracy, and always have an inbuilt independent check on those calculations over which they can exercise control.

Surveying the Guns. "The requirement for survey is to determine the position of artillery units relative to one another and relative to the target"¹. If the guns are going to shoot at a target several kilometres away, then they need to know their precise Location, and precise Bearing, relative to the map. This will also facilitate the concentration of many guns onto a single target; it will allow the guns to fire on targets located by the Sound Ranging and Radar systems; and it will reduce the number of adjusting rounds required for observed fire¹. Additionally, it will save time in producing the fire support, which is often the prime requirement of the supported arm commander.

In Phuoc Tuy Province, survey was provided at the highest level by Australian Army Survey Corps (1st Division Topographical Survey Troop – 1 Div Topo Svy Tp). These were survey points of origin (control points), used in the making of the original maps (by the French Army), and which had been surveyed to a very high degree of accuracy – in the order of centimetres for Eastings and Northings. Ngo Vinh Long is a Vietnamese national, employed by the US Army as the Public Relations representative for a Filipino company called Vera Cruz; the company was hired to update the maps of South Vietnam in the early 1960's.

"We worked with the old French maps made in 1910, but we also had U-2 reconnaissance photographs to help. Since we were making military maps, they had to be extremely detailed ... These were the maps the US Military used in Vietnam."

Ngo stated that his people were suspicious, with some saying, *"If they're making maps, they're preparing for war."* Ngo's reply was, *"Well, maybe, but if they have good, detailed maps then they're not going to bomb or shell innocent civilians, so what's wrong with that?"*¹

It was from these points, re-proven by US Army Survey Corps and 1 Div Topo Survey Tp, that Artillery Surveyors 'carried' the survey through survey schemes to the Regimental gun areas.

In theory, the gun Regimental Surveyors then carried the survey to the gun batteries and co-located mortar locating radars, etc. In practice, in Phuoc Tuy, the Artillery Surveyors of Det 131 Divisional Locating Battery carried the survey direct to the guns and radars. The prime reason for this was the development of the Fire Support Coordination Centre (FSCC), for which there was no Establishment Table, and so the Regimental Surveyors were absorbed into that role.

Surveying the gun batteries involved a wide variety of survey schemes, mainly depending upon the terrain to be covered, but it was rare (in Phuoc Tuy Province) that a gun battery did not have the highest order of survey.

Meteorology. Thus far, the world of the gunner has been subject to the physical aspects of location, range and bearing. But the world of the gunner is subject to far more than just physical aspects. Back in our garden, while watering the plants, a wind springs up, and the water spout is deflected from its path; the projectile from a gun is similarly deflected, with the amount of deflection dependent upon wind strength and direction. The path of the projectile is called the trajectory. However, it is not just the wind speed and direction which affects the trajectory; the temperature, pressure and humidity of the air (the atmosphere) all affect the 'elasticity' of the air, which in turn affect the range and accuracy of artillery. All of these atmospheric conditions are collectively described as meteor or 'met'.

To correct for these met effects may seem pedantic, but for a howitzer capable of shooting to 11km, the effects of the meteor, especially in the monsoon season when humidity was very high, could be as much as 10% of the range of the gun. To not allow for the meteorological effects could mean the difference between life and death of our own soldiers, so allowance was always made. How the meteorological information was produced is explained elsewhere.

Ammunition Variations. The propellant charge used in guns is typically cordite, which burns very rapidly to produce a large volume of gas. This large volume of gas, initially trapped behind the projectile in the barrel, builds to such a pressure that it eventually overcomes the resistance of the projectile's weight and the driving band, and fires the projectile from the gun. The mixing of each 'batch' of propellant produces a 'Lot' of propellant. This is conducted under quite stringent conditions and yet there are still variations in the rate of burning from one Lot to another. These variations produce different pressures in the gun, resulting in different muzzle velocities, which produce different ranges for the gun, depending upon the Lot in use. This leads to inaccuracy in the firing of the guns, and could cause unwanted casualties.

This was an ongoing problem for the duration of the war using US ammunition. 105 Bty, working with 173rd Airborne in Bien Hoa, was subjected to excessive numbers of different Lots of ammunition which produced range variations of up to 500m between Lots. These range variations did nothing to enhance the supported arms confidence in the guns. But there was a way around the problem. In the HQ Training Command Video, produced at the School of Artillery with artillery personnel involved in the firing of guns in support of the Battle of Long Tan, SGT Jim King makes the point that some 100 rounds per gun of the same Lot, were kept in reserve in the ammunition dump. These rounds were reserved for 'Danger Close' missions when artillery was called for, by the Forward Observer, to fall within 50-100m of our own troops; in other words when the troops were in direct contact with the enemy, and the best accuracy possible was called for. The remaining 'mixed Lots' were used for Harassing and Interdiction fire, or Suppressive fire, where accuracy was not so important.

Calibration. If the nozzle of our garden hose were to be used to distribute thousands of gallons of water over a period of time, then the nozzle would probably erode away somewhat, leaving the water a freer passage from the hose, with less pressure, and therefore less range would be achieved. While the gun is designed to fire a 105mm projectile at a specific velocity, for a given amount of propellant (powder), the firing of each successive projectile places strains on the gun and wear on the bore, making it (the bore) fractionally bigger with each firing. The greater the number of projectiles fired, the greater the wear, which naturally, has an impact on the velocity of the projectile; the greater the wear, the greater the reduction in velocity, and the shorter the range that will be achieved.

The pressure in a barrel is achieved through two 'sealing' mechanisms. First, the cartridge case, loaded behind the projectile, is made of brass or overlapping metal. When the propellant is ignited, the shell is pressed against the chamber wall with tremendous force, ensuring no gases pass back behind the casing and onto the breech face where it might escape and injure gun numbers operating the gun.

Second, the projectile has a copper 'driving band' which engages with the rifling in the barrel. The driving band has a diameter some 8-10mm greater than the bore of the howitzer, and it has two functions; to impart spin to the projectile as it

Neither the guns of 105 Bty, nor the guns of 1 Fd Regt, were calibrated prior to departure for Vietnam. In the peacetime army pre-Vietnam, the cost of calibrating the guns of a single battery would have been considered 'non-essential' expenditure, let alone treble the cost to calibrate the guns of a three-battery regiment. The result was that when both 105 Bty and 1 Fd Regt were warned for overseas service, there was not time to conduct a calibration shoot, even if the money was available. The non-calibration of guns prior to departure for Vietnam left the gunners with a difficult problem. Their role was to provide artillery support to the infantry, and often that support was required very close to our own troops. With non-calibrated guns, the level of confidence of the gunners to provide close support was severely eroded.

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 the eligibility service in Vietnam; instructions to vary the existing chain of command; Quartermaster Stores problems caused by the split of the regiment; planning list for the movement of personnel as Advance Parties, Main Body and Rear Parties were all part of the mire of paperwork, and there were no computers or word processors. All of the paperwork had to be typed onto Gestetner Sheets and then hand printed and stapled.

While the gun is designed to fire a 105mm projectile at a specific velocity, for a given amount of propellant (powder), the firing of each successive projectile places strains on the gun and wear on the bore, making it (the bore) fractionally bigger with each firing. The greater the number of projectiles fired, the greater the wear, which naturally, has an impact on the velocity of the projectile; the greater the wear, the greater the reduction in velocity, and the shorter the range it will achieve.

Sadly, this was a very costly exercise (in ammunition) in the 1960's prior to Vietnam, and so calibration was rarely completed. The guns left for Vietnam not 'shooting 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.

The book continues next month with “Chapter 6 – “Gunners in Operations”.

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

Comments from Chapter 3 Artillery Tactical Headquarters and The Fire Support Coordination Centre (FSCC) – by Paul Dickson, who served in Arty Tac in 1967...

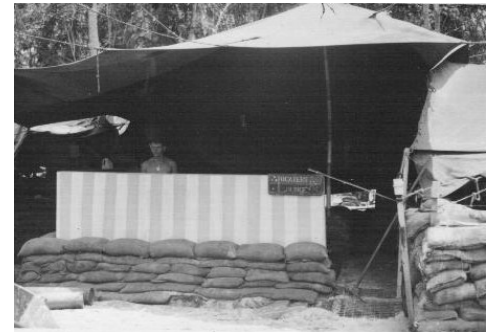
Page 9 of 24



The Det's area at left was directly opposite the Regt's area



Our lines were directly opposite HQ and improvements were made as time progressed.



The following are some comments received after last month's article...

Ernie Newbold...adds a comment -

"G'day Paul,

A vote of thanks belatedly to Jeff Evans for his work, great reading.

It was really good to see Jeff Evans efforts finally being seen. I had met Jeff a couple of times at Locating Artillery Assn. events and I attended his funeral too, a good man taken too soon.

Regards, Ernie."

AN INVESTIGATION

181 Days



. The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM)

This is just a continuing update with regards to the progress being made by **Richard Barry (OAM)** 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) –

"G'day Paul,

Nothing too much to report to your readers.

It seems to be taking the Minister a long time to make a decision more especially when the former government was about to make an announcement.

In the meantime, I have written to a cohort of Labor Senators and Members asking them to send encouraging words of support to the Minister.

I was hoping for a positive outcome by Vietnam Veterans' Day. I live in hope.

Cheers Richard."

Paul Dickson

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

. Prior 131's...

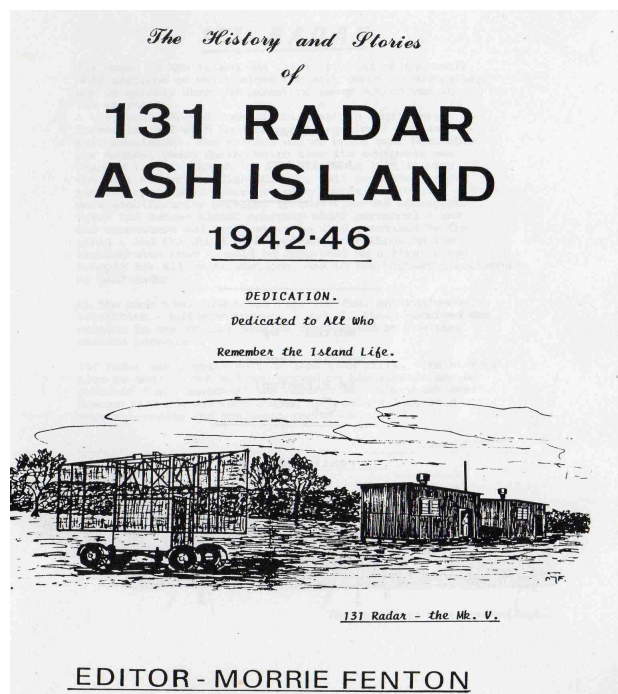
David Dougherty... forwarded the following which is a really interesting "coincidence", as he titled it, as to the discovery of an earlier 131 with very similar bones...

"Hi Paul,

A coincidence?

I was just given a small paperback re a unit called "131 Radar Ash Island" as it was thought that it may have something to do with us. Ash Island is located in Newcastle Harbour to the western end. I have attached 2 pages (at right and below) outlining its purpose.

Regards,
David"



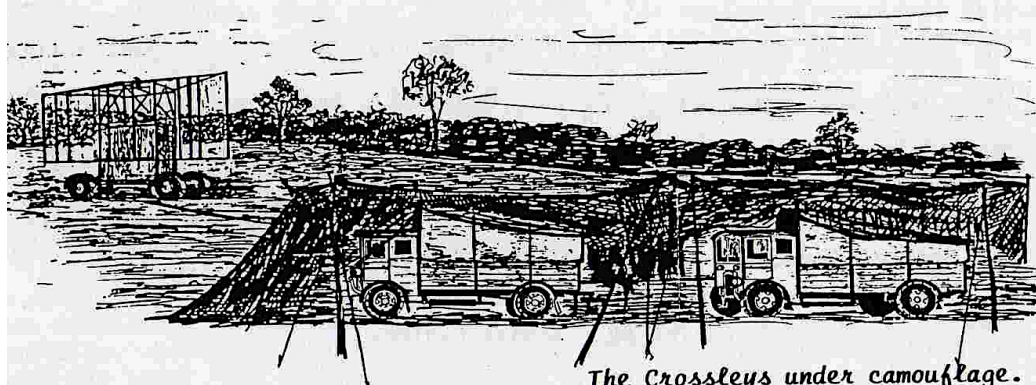
131 RADAR

131 Radar on Ash Island was fairly typical of the small RAAF stations on watch along the east coast of Australia, set up quickly when the threat of enemy action was at its greatest.

A very early Ground Control Interception (GCI) unit - formed in 1942 with English mobile equipment and an all male complement, the station was on watch over Newcastle for several years during which time its equipment was changed twice - finishing its service in 1945/46 with the most modern Canadian GCI set, well protected in an almost impregnable concrete igloo operations room. More significantly perhaps, in that time the operators' crews had become almost entirely WAAAF personnel - and the competence and application to duty practised by the girls - and the girls of supporting musters on the station with them - could be described as a first class example for all radar stations, and to the highest traditions of RAAF Radar.

At the same time, there was time for fun, entertainment, relaxation - and even romance - and all these received due mention in the various stories contributed by one-time station personnel.

131 Radar was a small unit of less than fifty. Its history also is small - but all who served on the station can be proud of their essential and careful war-time watch over Newcastle which was then one of Australia's largest and most vulnerable war equipment factories.



These two pages fit in perfectly with a current Project in hand with regards to the "Evolution 131 Project" which is based on an arbitrary question raised some time ago.

Watch this space!

. AUSTRALIAN CENSUS held on 10th August, 2021- REVELATIONS...

**The following is some information extracted from the current Census relevant to things
Defence Force oriented...**

Bert Blink started the ball rolling with is extract...

Service with the Australian Defence Force: Census

Key Statistics

More than half a million Australians (581,139) have served, or are currently serving, in the ADF.

There are 84,865 current serving members, and, 496,276 former serving members.

One in twenty (5.3 per cent) of Australian households reported at least one person who had served or is serving in the ADF.

3,159 (3.7 per cent) of currently serving Australian Defence Force members, and 11,610 (2.3 per cent) of previously served, identify as having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Service in the Australian Defence Force(a) by state and territory(b), 2021 Census

	Currently serving in the regular service	Currently serving in the reserves service	Previously served and not currently serving(c)	Total ever served(d)
New South Wales	18,007	6,506	127,657	152,170
Victoria	6,866	3,973	94,393	105,234
Queensland	16,803	6,339	139,973	163,112
South Australia	3,940	2,053	4,1861	47,852
Western Australia	4,496	2,413	55,507	62,417
Tasmania	290	670	17,515	18,473
Northern Territory	3,874	547	5,110	9,534
Australian Capital Territory	5,977	2,084	14,164	22,220
Australia(e)	60,286	24,581	496,276	581,139

Grahame Dignam also chimed in with this piece...

MINISTER KEOGH MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel

CENSUS SHOWCASES GARRISON CITY SERVICE

Townsville's status as Australia's largest garrison city has been confirmed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the release of the Census 2021 results today.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh said the results of the Census 2021 has shown that Townsville hosts the highest number of residents with military service.

"Around 14,200 current and former ADF personnel call Townsville home, comprising 8,700 veterans and 5,500 current serving ADF members," Minister Keogh said.

"Out of a city of 180,000 people this means almost 1 in 10 people in this great community have served our country.

"This data is more than just something to be proud of for Townsville – it clearly tells us as a government that this is a community where we can invest in even more services and support tailored to the defence and veteran communities.

"A fit-for-purpose Veterans and Families Hub is already supporting the 14,200-strong defence and veteran community in Townsville after officially opening in October last year to provide localised and targeted support services to veterans and families in the area."

"I have had the opportunity to talk to veterans and their families while visiting The Oasis Townsville today and seen first-hand how this Hub supports veterans and their families and connects them to the services and help that they need."

The Census 2021 has reported more than 581,139 people have stated they have served or are currently serving in the ADF. There is a veteran residing in 1 in every 20 Australian households.

A full breakdown of the Census data for veterans and Defence personnel can be found on the ABS website: www.abs.gov.au

. Bill Wight – "My Café Experience in Lombok, Indonesia" ...

Ed – After receiving Bill's Locator Profile, I couldn't help myself (as per usual), and followed up with Bill with regards to his foray into a "restaurant" in Lombok (or more precisely – Senggigi) - here's his response...

"After I retired in July 1999 I packed my bags and went to Indonesia. I had been invited by an Indonesian friend to visit his home island of Lombok.

In August as we were riding motor bikes up the road to the resort town of Senggigi we stopped to see some new shops being built.

We decided to establish a partnership and buy one of the shops and open a café.

We needed to extend out front as the shop was fairly small.



We opened in October 1999. The photo, at left, is from our opening night.

The inside of the café the following morning.

I returned to Australia in November and the café was doing really well. My partner contacted me in December as he wanted to do further extensions with the profit made. I suggested we wait.



Then came a series of events:

- . 20th January 2000 Lombok Riots - We closed the café for 2 months as my partner and his family evacuated to Bali as they were Christians. No damage done to café but a Chinese owned nightclub was burnt down. I was spending 6 months in Lombok and 6 in Australia each year.
- . 11th September 2001 - We watched the twin towers attack on TV.
- . 12th October 2002 - Bali Bombings – 3 bombs, nightspots targeted – 202 killed.
- . November 2002 to October 2004 - SARS outbreak in Asia.
- . 11th April 2005 – effects of the Tsunami
- . 1st October 2005 - Bali Bombings – 3 restaurants targeted – 21 killed.

All of the above affected our earnings but we managed to survive. We did further extensions including a third storey. I stayed back in Australia after 2004 as my mother had cancer.

We sold the business in 2008 and I received my return on the sale.

I made many friends in Lombok and managed to travel to Sumbawa, Komodo, Flores, Sulawesi and Java.

Always felt welcome wherever I went.

Bill."

Who ever thought that "Locators" were a boring lot – we wander off doing all sorts of out of left field things. Adventurous "things" that made us what we were and continue to be – that's why we were selected to be - "Locators"!

...

. Quiz Time.



This is not necessarily a typical (whatever that means) "Quiz Time" article but one with questions included, so let's get started...

...Does anyone know anyone who joined the Regular Army during or at the end of their National Service term?

Mail Call...

. A Reflection - Ernie Newbold ...

Ernie and I (Ed) were having one of our usual email exchanges and this struck a chord with me from Ernie – "Incidentally, on another topic mentioned recently in the *Eyes & Ears* I remember being asked if I would be prepared to extend my "tour" sometime in late 1967 because the supply of replacements was running behind schedule and the Detachment would be undermanned for a period of time.

That meant that I wouldn't be home for Christmas 1967, but the military life at Nui Dat was much more meaningful than what it would have been back at Holsworthy, so I agreed to stay longer. That gave me the opportunity to spend time in the field on a Fire Support Base during January 1968 with **Nick Proskurin, Mick King, Bob Wilson, Allen Morley, Jimmy Menz, Dutchy Van Driel & Peter Fuhrman**. By the time, I returned home and used up my leave I spent a few weeks at South Head personnel depot prior to being discharged on the 19th April 1968."

...I responded with – "Ernie,

Your return home alteration bit is interesting.

I don't think I was given an option, but may not have been as "brave" as you or wanting to push the envelope further." However, I have to agree that when I did return to Holsworthy, life there was "pretty boring".

. **Bill Wight** responded to one of **Ken Osborne's** photos in last month's *Eyes & Ears* -

"The person beside Warwick (Hamilton) and Fred (Waters) is **myself**.

Brings back memories. Thank you, Ken.

Regards,
Bill Wight"

...then he added in a later email – "I think the person to the right of me is Doc Halliday.
Cheers, Bill"



Mail Out

I started this in September, 2017 and have decided to continue running down the alphabet of names and sending some emails to blokes in general to say g'day and just to generally keep in touch. A lot of the blokes I've never met, so it's just to keep some connection alive. Plus, it's good to keep in touch, even sporadically, it may help to avoid any unpleasant unforeseen surprises.

Mail In - Here are the responses...

. **Rieny Nieuwenhof** – "Hi Paul,

Sorry, I haven't got back to you, I have been in a bit of a 'funk' lately.

Life on the beautiful Bellarine Peninsula continues in the winter months when the tourists have gone and life goes back into hibernation.

At the Geelong Vietnam Veterans Sub Branch, we are preparing for Vietnam Veterans Day. We have a memorial service in Geelong on Sunday 14th, before the 18th ceremony at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. It involves a march and service at our Memorial Park, followed by a luncheon for members and friends. The turn-out is usually pretty good, despite the problematic weather in August.

I've just returned from a VVAA State Council meeting in Moama. Lots of things on the agenda, some related to 'last days' issues as sub branch membership numbers continue to decline. Given that 2022 is the 50th Anniversary of the 'end of the war' it seems a natural time to scale down activities and prepare for the day when the VVAA Association no longer exists in its present form. Like so many others 'old age' is catching up and I have a number of health issues, but struggle on.

I enjoy the regular Zoom meetings with the boys, although the agenda is a very 'free flowing' event. Catch you again soon. Rieny."

. Ken Foster – "Paul.

All quite here, pretty much the same situation you are in without the long-distance travel plans.

Have been asked to mentor a young veteran about to have the same bowel surgery as I had, good to be able to help him through a difficult time both physical and mental.

Had to down scale any advocacy as I can't travel and not getting a lot of support from the ESO community but still doing my bit where I can.

No damage here from the recent floods but a lot of rain, lucky we live on the side of a valley not in the bottom.

Recent lightning strike took out our solar electricity system roof top panels, just got insurance company approval to replace it so that will occupy us for a few weeks.

When I read that back, there is a bit going on that we just manage, life's good, stay strong and keep well.

Regards, Ken."

...I had to make a comment re: solar and lightning strikes -

"Not great news about the lightning strike and the solar panels - I'd never thought about that. You think they'd earth them somehow?"

...and Ken responded -

"Solar systems are earthed; the system shuts down to prevent fire and that was how we finally identified the damage as a lightning strike. Ken."

. Warwick Brooker – "Thanks Dicko. When you said "three months", I had to check. Sure, is hard to believe. We must be ageing a little!

Yes, disaster upon disaster. Sounds biblical. How about you travel to Beijing and Moscow and deal with some troublemakers!

Nancy and I haven't been socialising lately, as we picked a respiratory infection (not COVID19) a month ago and it hasn't wanted to let go. We think we're almost there now. We always wear masks when shopping, etc., but we also babysit our grandson twice a week and the diseases – respiratory and gastric – keep arriving via his day-care centre. Never lets up!

All the best with the furnishing!

Hope to show my face next week. Brookey."

. Wade Cooper – "G'day Paul – good to hear from you. Yes, poor Sydney was in trouble with the weather. All good here in the capital – fresh, but the sun is out, and beer is cold. Must run to the next lesson – stay well and healthy!! Kind regards, Wade."

. Ted Jux – "Thanks for the latest e-mail.

We've been on the road for the past two months in our motor home.

Got to see parts of this great land that we haven't travelled before.

It was good to get out and about after lockdowns and cabin fever.

Left home and headed up to Armidale with flood damaged and potholed roads that you needed an APC to navigate through.

Down to Broken Hill where they were shooting a Mad Max sequel at Silverton.

Cover was rife everywhere so we wore masks when out shopping.

We eventually got down to the SA peninsulas where rain and storms caught up with us.

No fishing or squidling at all.

Introduced to a great Vietnam Museum in Port Pirie. Great set up.

Caught up with our youngest daughter who works in Melbourne at Seymour.

Had a few days with Sharon's brother and wife in Albury. 40C in the mornings and wet.

Headed warmer climes and had a week at Hat Head. School holidays so kids everywhere.

Home to warm weather and the sound of the ocean.

Guess what? More rain and floods.

Regards Ted and Sharon."

. Phil Connor – "Giddy Paul. Thanks for your update. Sorry I haven't been online as I mentioned.

I have had the two spine operations, one after the other, the first in April to fix/repair the upper spine (C5,6,7) with my Neuro saying that I had had my "head in too many scrums". And after the 6-week Post Op we decided to proceed immediately with the second. The second was in early June to repair the lower spine (L4,5) and I am now beginning week 6 and see the Neuro this week for sign off. I am doing OK now, back driving, as Miriam has had some difficulty with driving, given some of her conditions.

Weather on Sunnie Coast has been up and down particularly with cold nights and mornings. Had heavy rain a week ago and then bright, sunny days this week, although overcast today. Some friends and relatives down in Sydney have copped it with some going through 3rd or 4th flood. Not good.

The Ops have curtailed Bowls, frustrating! Separately, when good, I may take out the clubs and wander down to the driving range. The spine problems caused me to give up golf some 5 years ago.

We are still using masks although most go without. We do so as I am recovering from the Operations and Miriam is immunocompromised with some of her conditions. My daughter, here on the Coast, recently had Covid then, straight after, down with bad dose of the flu.

Our youngest grandson, also here on the Coast, has joined the Army Cadets, and loves it. You mentioned holiday trip. If you decide to come there are plenty of beds here. Cheers Phil. SLAVA UKRAINE."

. Mike Butler – "Hi Paul

Thanks for the note. Not a lot going on here. The weather is abysmal and I'm feeling the cold for the first time. Have planted some greens to try and reduce accelerating cost of veges but they take ages to grow and the prices will probably come down by the time I pick them!!! But I do like watching them grow. We are still wearing masks as the Covid/flu/colds are rampant at the moment. In response to your question about the second photo of me and a few other guys doused in suds in the last edition of *Eyes and Ears* I'm afraid I have no recollection except that it was probably something to do with leaving SVN. We have just had the caravan fully serviced and ready to get away when the weather improves. Probably Vic and NSW. Cheers, Mike Butler."

. Keith Ayliffe – "G'Day Paul

Yes, mate it has been a while since we last talked. I have had a fairly busy period, first helping in arranging the the Brisbane reunion which turned out very well thank goodness, except for the rain. Yes, the rain is back in Queensland robbing me of my golf days but then I look at the poor unfortunates who lost houses etc and I think I still have my house a bit knocked around but still standing. I had my insurance claim for some water caused damage knocked back because as they say "the age of the house and lack of maintenance" in my opinion is stupid. Since the reunion, I have been busy from a couple of observations that arose from the reunion, the observations were mainly to deal with the (our)association Banner and how many members and others thought the banner was missing elements and was not inclusive of the members who had been in the original association. This was mentioned not only to me but other committee members. Because I was interested the task fell to me to come up with three banner designs that met with the description "inclusive". So, after an initial search I found what I believe to be the main emblems that represented the majority of locators (Regs, NS, Ares) and the current day soldiers (20 Regt). I then selected what I thought as being the most recognisable emblems and being the fantastic drawer that I am I sought a graphic Designer who could put this stuff together. As such we have four designs to put before the AGM to select or not a Banner. the Current banner was placed in the mix as well. To save time at the meeting a letter and a questionnaire was sent to all members to vote on their selection and comment if they wished. This worked well with enough replies to consider a vote. This has been a most interesting venture and no matter which design is chosen they all have historic truth behind them. Another interesting facet too come from this venture is to find that one of the main items of locating, the atom behind the Artillery badge had not been registered I have now applied for this to be registered to LSTAA for both the hat badge and the Corp badge. Don't be concerned although it's not my place but I feel confident the LSTAA would give permission for your use. That's enough about me all the best Keith."

. Nick Armstrong – "Hello Paul

My apologies for the slow reply, and no excuses. Life here seems to pass without any dramas. The weather on the east side of Australia has been reported in a way that suggests everywhere is experiencing something similar. The weather around this part of the world has been normal, with our rainfall being possibly slightly below average. School bus driving has finally reduced, with EP Bus Charters managing to hire their full complement of drivers. The problem was not entirely of their making, with the Education Department appearing to give up advertising to fill vacancies, deciding to withdraw their buses and instruct the private operators to operate the services. Increasing the fleet size at short notice has been challenging. To add to the challenge, all these new services are only guaranteed for a short period, with long term contracts to be tendered at some time in the future. If the contracts are not won, there will then be the task of disposing of surplus vehicles. With hopefully less driving, my non-pension income should reduce. The past two years' additional income has been well above what I am allowed to earn. I have notified DVA and explained the circumstances, but they have not responded yet. Interesting times where our experience is needed, but we are not supposed to work. Now that politicians are handling the Covid epidemic, we have been encouraged to believe it is all in the past. Unfortunately, the viruses have not received the same message. Now we are all able to go about our daily tasks, free to infect all and sundry. Robin and I have both had our full complement of injections. We also try to avoid crowds, and use masks in shops and other confined situations. News reports suggest Covid infections in the community are rising rapidly, with hospitals close to capacity. Medical advice, which was generally followed in the early days, now seems to be largely ignored. I do not understand why. Recently I was presented with The National Emergency Medal. It was for service with the SA Country Fire Service, for the bushfires in the 2019-20 fire season. Locally, the fire season was not particularly busy. I did travel to NSW to provide support during the fires, north-east of Tenterfield, in November 2019. Later, in early 2020, I was involved with the fires on Kangaroo Island. In both cases the fires were no longer a threat when I was there. Once the decision is made to mobilise additional resources, it develops a momentum of its own. Given there were plenty of areas of unburnt country, I am sure we would have been needed if fires had re-ignited.

I have had the boat out a few times recently, although my target fish are not particularly plentiful. The water temperature in Boston Bay is around 13degC. Previous experience has been that the colder water does correspond with fewer fish. It is still good to get out, and fewer fish mean less cleaning!

I think that is all for now.

Cheers to everyone from Nick and Robin.

P.S. Just had a call from the bus company, asking me to go back onto full-time driving while they get another driver qualified. Apparently, another Education Department driver has resigned, and they are not advertising for a replacement. The company will have to acquire another bus and driver!"

From the Advocate's Desk...

Our professional Advocate's contact details: -

Peter Piro 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 – see what's coming up and going on...?

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

BE VIGILANT! The **HACKING** continues...please be vigilant in examining the source of your incoming emails – the "Subject" may seem innocent, but check the senders address – it may not be the from the name that you recognize!

Reports are coming in not only using my name but others are being hacked as well. **Paul Dickson**

Locator Profiles and Vales...

This is just a request to all, that we need to complete, and perhaps, update Locator Profiles, because as of times past we have lost mates and as time moves forward we will continue to lose mates.

Let's keep a memory alive.

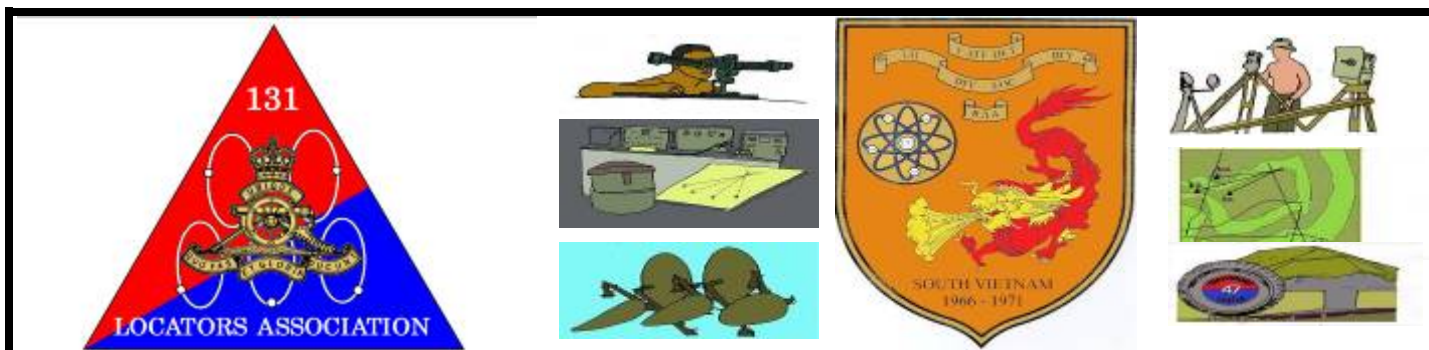


The Vale section in *Eyes & Ears*, can at times be very scant of personal and service details, yes, there is the DVA Nominal Roll which contains tour dates, but nothing else of personal details and supplies nothing for those who did not serve overseas.

Is it possible that we can have Locator Profiles completed with photos, where possible, and/or updates to make this section more honouring to those mates who pass and may be unknown to others to help make the Unit and Detachment archived history have more heart?

Take 10 minutes, please, to complete a Locator Profile as it is important to all of us.

For a blank Locator Profile contact Paul Dickson at 131eyesandears@gmail.com



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 from the Sec/Treas - We have been receiving renewals - some with Merchandise orders as usual but one stood out: -

"Please check your member status.

As one older Locator, who shall remain nameless, said "I am very optimistic I will last this long?

Our record is very favourable at the moment- better than Melbourne on Cup Day."

Email sectreas131locators@gmail.com to check. Grahame

50 Years
April 1966 - April 2016



The Memories Remain
1966 - 1971



find us on

Facebook

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

. Pertinent Points – extracted from the General Meeting of the 131 Locators Association Inc.

Held at Anzac Memorial Hyde Park Sydney NSW

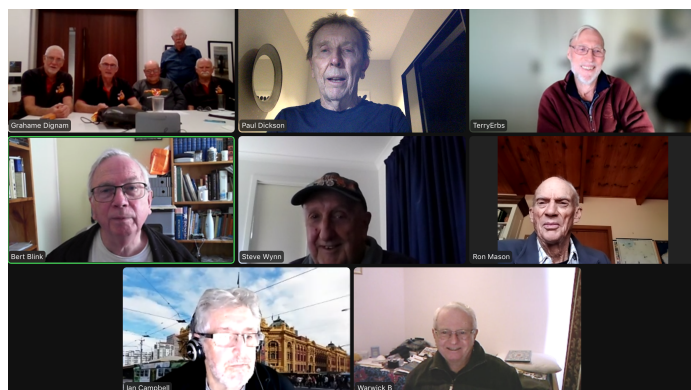
And via Zoom internet on Tuesday 12 July 2022

Attendees were:

Ian Amos, Allen Morley, Merv Nairn, Grahame Dignam, Gordon Malcolm, Paul Dickson, Terry Erbs

Bert blink, Steve Wynn, Ron Mason

Ian Campbell and Warwick Brooker



Apologies: were received from Nick Proskurin, Ged Carroll, Ernest Newbold, Bob Billiards, George Lane, other State Reps and Jim Fitzgerald.

President Allen Morley welcomed those present and those attending via Zoom. Due to the ceremonies at the Venue the meeting began at 11.30AM.

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

Presidents report. Allen referenced:

- . The change in LSTAA where the Secretary and Treasurer positions (2) have been vacated prior to the AGM. **Steve Wynn** has volunteered to fill in for the time being.
- . Preference for which banner design is preferred for LSTAA and or 20 Regiment to be resolved at the AGM.
- . The Enoggera 131 Battery banner is worse for wear and need replacing and the Sydney needs updating.

Public Officer Report: Following our visit to the Anzac Memorial this month we are now aware that we need to adopt guidelines for Public Liability Insurance needed when we physically visit external sites on an official basis (required to cover the site owner during our visit).

The matter will be investigated and a report presented to our AGM to adopt if suitable.

Webmaster Update: Webmaster Bob apologized for his absence from this meeting as he was spending family time skiing in NZ – refer is Facebook postings. Facebook now has 311 members

Health Report:

- . We were advised via Facebook that **Gary Navas** had passed. We will investigate and advise when full details are verified.
- . A general discussion about health ensued - **Dicko** advised he had heard from 4 Vets who were in various stages of ill health. Others of a senior age mentioned were **Geoff Jebb** who is reported to be ok at last report.

General Business and around the grounds: Discussions ensued on the following:

- . **Warwick Brooker** advised that he is in touch with **K McNamara** who has mobility problems and who is also in touch with “**Wirey Hackett**”.
- . **Terry Erbs** reports that the Australian Govt is to supply drones to Ukraine. Exact information as to model etc. is unsubstantiated at the moment.
- . **Merv Nairn** attended a TPI Association meeting and reported the TPI is asset rich.
- . There has been a proposal made to extend the Gold Card to wives of Veterans. More detail is required to establish the true case.
- . The issue of “No Profiles” for Veterans who pass pose problems for gathering information for VALE items that do justice to the Veteran.

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

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 9th August, 2022 at 1100hrs

Venue: to be advised

Also, available via Zoom link to be advised



. Birthdays in the Battery...August –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	PHILLIP ROSS	3794468	06 05 1969	30 04 1970	
1	JOSEPH LOSIAK	218302	04 11 1969	05 11 1970	
1	JOHN LUCAS	3796256	20 02 1970	11 02 1971	
2	JOHN GREENAWAY	3790617	24 10 1967	22 10 1968	
3	LES SMITHLESTER	1201202	23 09 1968	24 09 1969	
3	MICHAEL BUTLER	3796958	04 06 1970	09 06 1971	
3	GRAHAM GREENLAND	2792441	15 04 1970	29 07 1970	† 17.11.14
4	ANDREW OVERALL Lt.	235330	22 02 1969	21 02 1970	
7	MARTY VAN DRIEL	38954	27 11 1967	13 03 1968	† 08.08.98
7	RANDALL JONES	2788775	29 01 1969	28 11 1969	
8	ARTHUR LUXFORD Sgt.	212803	20 01 1969	28 01 1970	† 01.01.08
8	EDWIN LEWIS Sgt.	53909	18 03 1970	11 03 1971	† 26.08.92
9	TERRY WELSH	4721779	03 03 1971	29 06 1971	131
	" "		30 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd REGT
9	GARRY GRIMWOOD	2795771	24 03 1971	01 07 1971	131
	" "		01 07 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
10	DAVID JOHN TROEDEL	326409	N/A		132DLB † 13.05.21
12	ALAN THOMSON	42308	20 05 1966	22 06 1967	† 07.10.15
13	BRIAN HACKETT	2783449	03 01 1967	12 12 1967	
13	STAN BRIGGS	1731999	27 11 1967	17 09 1968	

13	BOB BRUCE	4718049	11 06 1967	13 12 1967	
15	JOHN POLLOCK	53860	{17 04 1967	24 05 1967	131
	" "		{05 02 1971	07 04 1971	12 Fd REGT
15	KEVIN TAYLOR	2791357	29 07 1969	23 07 1970	
15	NORMAN McMANUS WO2	26202	09 11 1970	19 08 1971	† 04.10.2016
17	PIERRE GOSS	213990	24 03 1969	25 03 1970	† 06.08.2011
20	PETER BINNS	356367	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
21	NORMAN JONES	5717611	04 05 1971	01 12 1971	12 Fd Regt / AACC
22	JOHN VICKARY	1732218	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
22	STUART SPORN	4718471	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
22	ANTHONY COUTTS	1733291	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	† 1988
23	ROBERT ETHERINGTON	66962	04 11 1969	19 11 1970	
24	JOHAN MOLENCAMP	2795074	03 03 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "		02 07 1971	09 08 1971	12 Fd REGT
25	LES FROST	215230	22 04 1966	28 04 1967	† 26.03.14
25	KENNETH JONES	2786931	27 11 1967	26 11 1968	
25	COLIN WEST	2152525	20 01 1969	21 01 1970	
26	MAX TROYNAR	3790244	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
26	STANLEY PATTERSON	38451	29 01 1969	28 11 1969	
27	LAWRENCE FARR	1734257	27 08 1969	25 02 1970	† 2009
27	KEN PIESLEY	2787174	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	† 26.03.14
27	GORDON MALCOLM	2785906	26 09 1967	17 09 1968	
27	PETER WHITAKER	2786848	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
27	PETER CREEDON	2790207	31 01 1969	28 01 1970	
27	GRANT PERRINS	1734509	27 11 1969	04 06 1970	
28	DAVID PIMM	215746	17 04 1967	23 04 1968	RAEME
29	TIM FORD Capt.	235300	19 08 1970	05 08 1971	
31	STEPHEN PALMER	18820	12 04 1968	30 04 1969	RAEME † 03.12.72

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

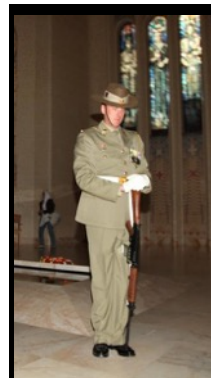
Ed – 9 blokes not highlighted is quite a number out of the 25 still with us (well, on the list above). How about a bit more head scratching to see if we can locate a few more!

. **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 breathes for a while longer.

. **Located...**

Have a look at the Association's web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au> – you might find some lost mates or get in touch with us and see if we can for you.

Vale



Name: Opie, Andrew Lance Diprose
Service No: 43611 Rank: 2nd Lieutenant
SVN In: 04 05 1966 SVN Out: 02 01 1967
DoB: 09 12 1944 DoD: 14 07 2022
Lest We Forget



. **Ernie Newbold** – “G'day Paul,

I have received sad news from George Lane today, advising that Andrew Opie passed away late yesterday, Thursday 14th July 2022.

George Lane and **Spike Chase** intend to attend his funeral to represent the Detachment / Battery.

Andrew Opie was the "pioneer" Radar lieutenant with the Detachment.

Regards,
Ernie.”

Andrew's Locator Profile -

Surname: Opie **Given Name:** Andrew **Nickname:** None that I knew about **DoB:** 9/12/44 **State of Origin:** SA

What did you do before the army: Clerk, Dept of Army, Keswick Barracks, Adelaide

Army service dates from: June 64 **to** November 67 **Regt No:** 43611

If served in SVN, then dates: from 04.06.66 **to** 02.01.67

Battery/s Activity/s (Bty/s served in, Sections of Bty/s worked in, locations, dates etc):

Graduated Portsea Officer Cadet School June 1965

Radar Section Commander

Who were you in the service with: the “Originals” **Last Rank:** 2Lt

What did you do after the army:

. Associate to Sir Richard Blackburn, Federal Court, in Darwin and Canberra for 12 years. Orchardist, Mt Tamborine, Queensland for 2 years

. Centrelink - Queensland for 8 years. Retired 2001 due to cancer

Anything else of interest: Married for 40 years, wife Jenny - 2 Children and 3 grandchildren

What city / town do you live in now: Carrara, Queensland.



Out on exercise with Radar



International tug of war, Nui Dat, 1966
Me, hatless, third from left of spectators.



Some peace & quiet in the lines

More photos in SVN taken from Andrew's archive...



Other photos can be viewed on the Associations web site in Member Galleries.

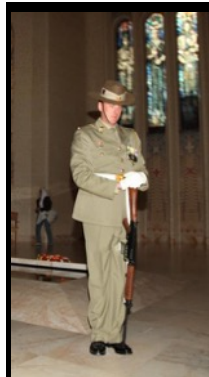
. **Ernie Newbold** sent in the following email –

"G'day Paul,

I have received confirmation from George Lane that he and Spike Chase represented the Association at Andrew Opie's funeral on Monday, 25th July.

Regards, Ernie."

Vale



Name: **Navas, Gary Gordon**

Service No: 2793162 Rank: Gunner

SVN In: 30 05 1970 SVN Out: 26 05 19715 Det 131

DoB: 03 01 1949

DoD: 10 07 2022

Lest We Forget



. **Pete Summers** forwarded the following –

"Hi Paul it is with sadness that I am letting you know of the passing on of Gary Navas. Gary was a member of Det 131 Div Loc Bty and served in SVN 1970/1971. Gary passed away in Westmead Hospital Sydney on Sunday 10/7/22. Funeral details are not settled yet but if anyone would like them, please contact Pete Summers 0428 288 155 or petermsummers@hotmail.com. Many thanks Pete S."

John Lucas –

"Hi Paul,

Here are two pics I have of Gary in Vietnam.

Cheers

John."

This one is from the Horseshoe 1971.

Below is a group shot from the first sensor training course in Vung Tau 1970



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PJE/71.0121/VN



Gary

Original Australian Unattended Ground Sensor / Sensor Course Participants - ARVN Signals School, Vung Tau.
 Back-Standing-L to R: Pfc Ryder, USA; Pfc Rosenfeldt, USA; Cpl John Anderson; Captain Norm Gomm; Gnr Stuart Telford,
 Bombardier Albert Jacka; Gnr John Lucas; Gnr Laurie Mion; Major Cooper, USA; Gnr Warren Jaenke;
 Frontrow squatting-L to R: Pfc Patterson, USA; Gnr Geoff Carthew; Sgt John Brewer; L/Bombardier Jeff Bassard;
 Gnr Gary Navas; L/Bombardier Richard Edwards; Sergeant, 1st Class Oliveri, USA. Taken 10/11 July 1970 - Vung Tau.

Charles Brewer – “Thanks for posting this Paul; it’s so good that you keep “comms open”.
RIP Gary - and the Peace of God for his family.
 Blessings; Charles ex 7Fd & 133Div Loc.”

Vale



Name: Gowans, Patrick Thomas Francis

Service No: 57036 Rank: Brigadier

SVN In: 09 09 1965 SVN Out: 19 09 1965 Det 131
11 03 1971 04 01 1972 AATTV

DoB: 28 02 1933 DoD: 22 06 2022

Lest We Forget



Peter Bruce (Obituary Resource Officer, RAAH) advised us of the following –
 We have received advice of the death on 26 June 2022 of Brigadier Pat Gowans. He was 89. Pat visited Australian Forces in Vietnam in September 1965 and deployed with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) from March 1971 until January 1972. His appointments with AATTV included Assistant to Chief of Staff, HQ I Corps, Senior Australian Adviser, I Corps. Aug – Nov 71, G-3 Training adviser, HQ I Corps, forming 3rd ARVN Division, Dec 71 Commander AATTV Training Group, Vung Tau. In addition to the unit citations awarded to AATTV, Pat was also awarded the US Commendation Medal for Service, the Republic of Vietnam Army Distinguished Service Order and the South Vietnamese Armed Forces Honour Medal 1st Class.

And in the morning we will remember them...
May They Rest in Peace



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

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

Hope we hear from you?

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

. Other related sites...

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



www.artilleryhistory.org



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

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

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

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

. 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...



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

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