

THE EYES and EARS

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

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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**

2023 – 57 Years and the Detachment 131 Spirit Lives On: 1966 – 1971



**MARCH 1968 TET OFFENSIVE –
The TURNING POINT?**

Photo: Ernie Newbold

Extracted from the AWM archives... 'Tet'

The year 1968 began with a major offensive by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, launched during the Vietnamese lunar new year holiday period, known as "Tet". Not only the timing but the scale of the offensive came as a complete surprise, taking in cities, towns, and military installations throughout South Vietnam. While the "Tet Offensive" ultimately ended in military defeat for the communists, it was propaganda victory. US military planners began to question if a decisive victory could ever be achieved and the offensive stimulated US public opposition to the war. For Australian troops, the effects of the offensive were felt around their base at Nui Dat, where a Viet Cong attack on targets around Ba Ria, the provincial capital, was repulsed with few casualties.

Australian forces were heavily engaged during Tet. On 1 February troops from the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), along with cavalry and artillery support, were given the task of recapturing Ba Ria, the capital of Phuoc Tuy ["fook twee"] province, which had been occupied by the Viet Cong.

After 9 February both battalions were ordered to move back to the south of the area of operations, around two fire support bases codenamed "Harrison" and "Andersen". From here, 7RAR was relieved by 3RAR on 11 February and 2RAR was returned to Nui Dat two days later. FSB Harrison was now closed, but operations continued to be directed from FSB Andersen, which was located near Trang Bom. Three times between 18 and 28 February, Andersen came under attack but each time the Viet Cong were beaten off.

Meanwhile, the Australians left in Phuoc Tuy were also engaged in heavy fighting, after Viet Cong forces attacked the provincial capital, Ba Ria, and other population centres like Long Dien, Hoa Long and Dat Do. At first light on 1 February the National Liberation Front flag was flying over BA Ria. The whole town appeared to have been infiltrated; government installations had been over-run or cut off, and snipers had taken up position in numerous places, including the town's cinema and the cathedral.

At Nui Dat, the newly arrived deputy commander of 1ATF, Colonel Donald Dunstan, sent the task force Ready Reaction Force (RRF) to assist the Province Chief in his attempts to recapture the enemy-held parts of BA Ria. A Company of 3RAR, carried in APCs (armoured personnel carriers) of A Squadron, 3 Cavalry Regiment, was ordered to join in the defence of Sector (province) Headquarters. From the moment, the carriers entered the town the Australians came under light automatic fire, and by the time they arrived at Sector Headquarters they were receiving RPGs as well. In fighting to secure other government positions, two carriers were damaged and disabled.

By mid-afternoon on 2 February, the majority of the Viet Cong had withdrawn and A Company was relieved to return to Nui Dat. Late the next day, D Company of 3RAR was deployed to Long Dien to assist in clearing it and the nearby village of Ap Long Kien. By early afternoon on 6 February both tasks were complete and the company returned to Nui Dat.

The task force was again called upon on 7 February to assist with the security of BA Ria and (the next day) Long Dien. Other elements of 3RAR were involved in an uneventful sweep of Hoa Long on 8–9 February, but this was effectively the end of the Tet Offensive in Phuoc Tuy. Overall, the casualty toll on both sides had been relatively small – including five Australians killed and nearly 50 Viet Cong.

Operation Coburg was brought to an end on 1 March, and the task force elements returned to Nui Dat. In the fighting in Bien Hoa province, enemy losses had amounted to 145 killed, 110 wounded/escaped and five captured, for Australian casualties of seven men killed in action, three died of wounds, and 75 wounded. The Viet Cong had also lost considerable quantities of weapons, equipment and rice.

If the Australians could count themselves as successful, so could the allies generally across the country.

Although initially overwhelmed by the scale of the Tet Offensive, they were able to recover their balance within about six hours of its start. The communists were driven out of most of the towns within four days and the general uprising which they hoped to trigger did not eventuate. Fighting continued in Saigon until mid-February, but the cost to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army was out of all proportion to the losses they inflicted.

In all, some 45,000 enemy personnel were killed by the end of February (out of a total of 84,000 committed to the offensive), compared to allied military deaths of about 6,000. With the locally based communist infrastructure in the South effectively annihilated, the leadership of North Vietnam would be obliged to send increased numbers of troops from its own territory to keep the war going. Judged on this scale, the offensive had been an unmitigated disaster – in every sense except public perception.

The very fact that the communists had been able to mount such a concerted effort, at a time when allied military authorities had been providing assurances that they were well on top in the conflict, was sufficient for pundits to deduce that the communists must be winning the war after all. It did not matter, for example, that the enemy troops who stormed the US Embassy in Saigon had been on a suicide mission, with all being cut down in the outer grounds. In the sensationalist press, this episode was distorted into a story that the enemy had actually occupied the embassy buildings. Faced with a tidal wave of public scepticism and disenchantment, the American government accepted a new political and psychological reality. US President Lyndon Johnson rejected requests by his commander in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, for another 206,000 American troops to regain the initiative and called for a detailed review of official policy in Vietnam. On 31 March, Johnson ordered a halt to the bombing of most of North Vietnam and withdrew from the 1968 presidential election. **There could not have been a starker admission that his policy on the war had failed.**

Tet had handed the communists a propaganda coup which actually reversed the military results of the offensive. It was for them, in every sense, a victory snatched from the ashes of defeat

Contrary to popular belief, the Tet Offensive was a major military defeat for the communists who suffered devastating losses, especially among the Viet Cong. And there was no popular uprising in South. Tet was, however, a major political victory for the north. It was a turning point in American and allied perceptions of the war, creating the impression that the war could not be won.

We remember and pay tribute to our locators who served.
We also note with pride: L/Bdr James Leslie Menz, 38838, Survey Section. SVN tour 1967-68
DoB 01.02.46 KIA 18.02.68
May He Rest in Peace Forever.



The “Lost Locator Project”

This Project is being re-ignited for 2022.

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

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

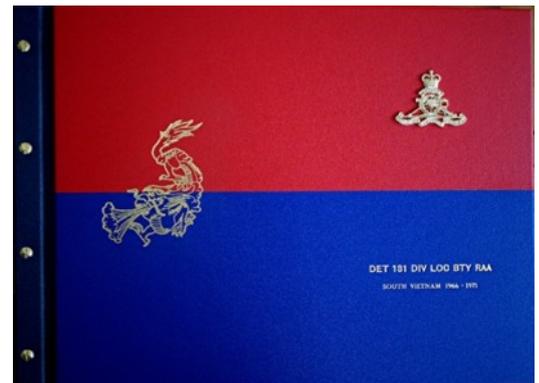
We regularly check bereavement/funeral notices and this does not locate members in the way we really want to. So, we're appealing for YOUR help in scouring all sorts of sources – local RSL's may not a good starter.

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

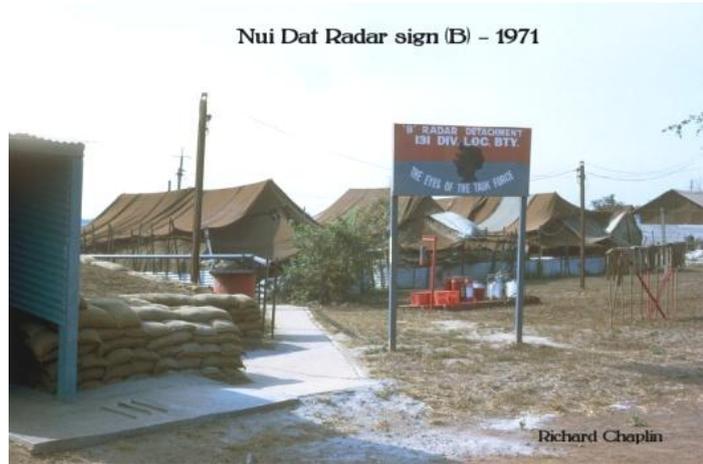
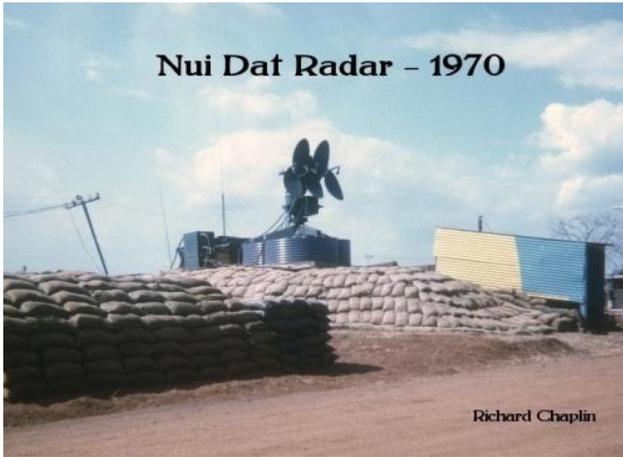
Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

“End of an Era” by– Richard Chaplin 1970 - The end of an era.

Richard fastidiously kept 'diary' notes and photos during his SVN tour (21.01.70 to 13.08.70) and it's great to be able to share them again...

Keith Ayliffe's acknowledgement – 'Official records of the AN/KPQ-1 radar lack necessary detail for this period and I am grateful to **Richard Chaplin** for allowing me to use extracts from his diary, these extracts are identified in italics and RC at the end.'

January – May – An AN/PKQ-1 radar located at HORSESHOE feature.
An AN/PKQ-1 radar located at NUI DAT (AWM 3-6-22)



Not much changed over the years, the sign remained the same, the lines never changed only the command post seems to have acquired new sand bags and a coat of paint.

18 January - 12 to 15 enemy mortar rounds (no calibre recorded) fired into Horseshoe, mortrep obtained by Det 131 LP and locreps produced by radar and sound ranging. CB fire conducted by C/2/35 US 155mm SP onto suspected mortar base plate position - YS394716. No further information recorded

2 February - At 0145 Hrs four (4) Radar operators at Nui Dat, are affected from gas from an unknown source near the radar. Investigations failed to find the source or identify the gas. The operators were fully recovered 24 hrs later and reported no ill effects.

"In the evening, just after I had completed the 1st Shift manning the Nui Dat Radar Unit I had retired to bed at 0130. After about 15 minutes I felt a horrible feeling in my nose like breathing pepper or something acidic, made me feel nauseous, and my eyes started to water. I heard Burt Jacka sniffing as well and realised that it wasn't just me. It was then that I realised that it was probably gas. I grabbed my gas mask, and by then the alert had been given and everybody headed to the bunkers or command post with rifles and ammunition just in case it was a ground attack – it wasn't as it turned out and we were stood down." – RC

4 February – "Burt Jacka and I travel as Shotguns on a convoy with the Engineers and a crane to Xuyen Moc where Australian Engineers were building a new Town Hall for the village." - RC

9 February – "Caught the 0715 helicopter in to Nui Dat from the Horseshoe FSB and built a covered entrance to the Nui Dat Radar Unit Command Post, paint it yellow, and installed a red light at the entrance. Caught 1745 chopper back to the Horseshoe FSB." – RC



Nui Dat, South Vietnam. March 1970. Adelaide Army sponsored concert party's finale at Luscombe Bowl. The entertainers on stage are, left to right: Tammy (of the brother and sister act, Ricky and Tammy), Bev Harrell, Ricky, the Wills Sisters, Ann and Sue. The show was rated tops by hundreds of off- duty troops who packed the bowl. Copyright AWM.

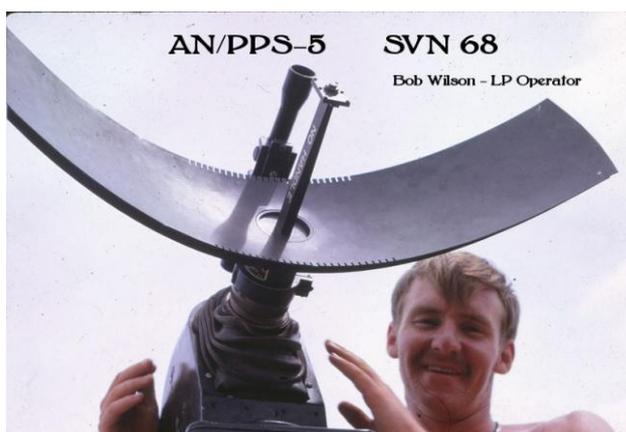
The Melbourne show 1967. L-R Bob Retrot, John Vickery, Miss Patti McGrath, Tony Goldsmith, Leigh Hemming. Photo supplied by: Kevin Browning



20 February – "Catch chopper into Nui Dat and watch the Show at the Bowl – Bev Hamel, The Wilson Sisters, and Ricky and Tammy. At night B52s conducted an air strike on the Long Greens after Aussie troops had large contacts during the previous days. The ground shuddered and the mountains glowed red." - RC

21 February - B52 strike on the Long Hai Hills in support of 8 RAR. Following the B52 strike and intensive artillery fire, three rifle companies, with tanks and cavalry still in support, redeployed to the Long Hai Hills.

22 February – “On last shift we did some Impact Point identification for friendly mortars firing on suspected VC activity reported by Topsy 25.” – RC. (Note: refers to a ground surveillance radar possibly AN/TPS-25)



Authors Note: The US had a number of types of Ground surveillance radar (GSR) systems in SVN among them were the aging AN/TPS-25 (sometimes referred to as Topsy 25) and the newer AN/PPS-5. Both had a range of about 10000M and were used to detect movement. (Vehicle, human and animal movement could be detected.)

24 February – Go out with a Protection Party for the 131 Div Loc Bty Survey Unit. Travel in APCs and have a very rough ride through the undergrowth. See 3 monkeys and a deer. During our clearing patrol, we nearly lost one of our men (Warren Jeanke) who got left behind but luckily, he was quickly noticed as missing. We retraced our tracks and found him. After we had been in the area for about 3 hours we heard firing about half a mile away and found out it was one of our infantry patrols coming straight for us. We then found out that we had not had permission to be in the area. We immediately travelled hell for leather out of the area leaving clouds of dust behind us. In our haste the APC I was on hit a tree branch containing a large ants nest and they went everywhere including into the APC. A fumigating grenade was used to kill them but everything then was covered in yellow dust! Later in the day myself, Vic Cicollela and Lt Paul Tys went out of the base to check on a reported blind mortar that turned out to be an Illumination Mortar. “- RC

1 March – Battery BBQ – plenty of good food and beer followed by a football match between the Nashos and the Regs – punches and blood everywhere!” – RC

6 March – Part of a Protection Party for the Survey team – hot and very dusty.” - RC

7 March - 4 Field Regiment RAA arrived in SVN and in the first Commanders monthly report, there is a report that —one radar was located at Nui Dat and the other at HORSESHOEII

4 Fd Regt Standard Operation Procedures (SOP's) had an allowance for a Radar Section Commander and a Radar No. 1 to accompany their recce party. (AWM95 – 3-7-10)

“Watch the parade for the change-over from 1 Field Regiment to 4 Field Regiment. Film – Thoroughly Modern Millie. - 2200hrs – 77 degrees Fahrenheit.” - RC

15 March – “Service Horseshoe radar unit generator. Return to Nui Dat in jeep the long way and through (sic “Throw”!) tins of (FSB Horseshoe) C Rations out the back for the local children along the way – they love it! Test Nui Dat radar's ability to track US Battery 155 shells and it works reasonably well.” - RC.

19 March - “Go to Vung Tau (Peter Badcoe Club) for the day however, about a mile from the Nui Dat gates we are shot at from the rubber trees – a bullet passes very close to Chris Chapple's head. A short time later our vehicle breaks down and we need to be towed the rest of the way to Vung Tau. Spend the day in the pool and surfing. When we get back to Nui Dat we find that the Radar Unit had been in operation since 1400 as there were contacts in the Warbies and one New Zealander had been killed.” – RC

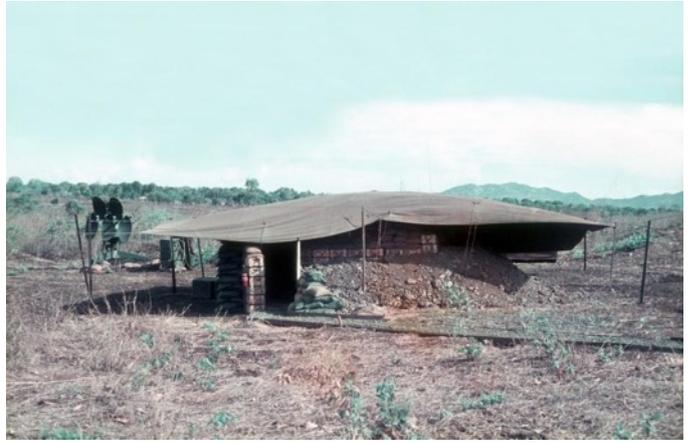
20 March - Van Kiep (YS3690) reports incoming mortars. Radars produce Locreps at Grid 381632 which is engaged by C/2/35 US Arty. Results unknown. This is the last known recording of an enemy mortar locrep by an AN/KPQ-1 in SVN. “Mal Musgrave gets a Locrep from the Horseshoe Radar Unit and choppers verify about 30 Vietcong. US Husky Charlie Battery fire 124 X 155 rounds at the target. The Commanding Officer is pleased with the Radar Units performance and at last we are getting some recognition.” - RC

29 March – “In afternoon prepare radar for an Air Burst Registration but the guns decide not to do it in the end – so play cards with Chris (Chapple) and Mal (Musgrave) down in the CP (Command Post).” - RC

31 March - “Go to FSB Anne with Sgt Peter O'Donnell as he had not seen a FSB (neither had I apart from the Horseshoe). Very dusty indeed – the worst I have experienced to date. Go through Ban Jar (a North Vietnamese settlement). Do Air Burst Registration in the afternoon.” - RC

4 April – “Come in from Horseshoe for 2 days as I have night off. Do an Air Burst Registration for the Yanks artillery, and they say they will do their calculations...so I leave. Then they change their minds, and Bdr Mal Musgrave has to follow my previous calculations as he could not find me – I was playing table tennis!” – RC

25 April - "After a short Anzac Day parade in 102 degrees Fahrenheit and high humidity the whole Nui Dat crew went out to the Horseshoe to set up a new Command Post on higher ground to protect it when the wet season arrives. A bulldozer helped by pushing large amounts of soil against the command post walls to provide added protection (and nearly destroyed it in the process!) The new CP is much larger than the original and much cooler." – RC
 The last new site for the radar at the Horseshoe. Completed **25 April 1970**, ceased operations on **18 May 1970**.



Pictured on right is Jeff Bassford doing what all good radar operators did – posed with the radar. Photos: Richard Chaplin

27 April - "Go back to the Horseshoe and move all the equipment from the old CP to the new CP including setting up the radar unit in its new location. Burn all old ammo boxes and sand bags.

29 April - "Hear that Radar units may be pulled out of SVN with 8 RAR in August/September as will 27 men from our battery." - RC

30 April, most of the detachment again go to the Horseshoe for the morning to move the generators." - RC

12 May - "Catch chopper from Horseshoe to the Dat – pick up a carton of "goffas" and a box of C Rations for the Horseshoe crew. Also learn that one radar unit will be pulled out within 14 days and the other soon after." - RC

18 May - The AN/PKQ-1 radar at the Horseshoe was closed down/came out of action for the last time in SVN.

"WO Perry advises that the Horseshoe FSB Radar Unit is to be pulled out that day, and Sgt Black and I go to the Horseshoe to assist and oversee dismantlement of the radar unit." - RC

19 May - The AN/PKQ-1 radar located at Nui Dat came out of action/closed down for the last time being the last operational AN/KPQ-1 mortar locating radar in SVN.

"Radar unit at Nui Dat pulled out. On the same day, the radar units' crew were advised that they would soon be on 107 Battery Strongpoint duty, work in Arty Tac, and may also have some role in Civil Aid." - RC

20 May - "Worked all day cleaning both radar units and then was advised by DSM (WO Perry?) and Sgt Black that they will need to be transported to Vung Tau by truck for steam cleaning and boxing up prior to shipping to Australia. I was advised that myself plus 6 others from the radar section would be going to Vung Tau with the radar units and would likely spend a few days there assisting with the final cleaning/boxing prior to the units being shipped back to Australia." - RC

1 June - All radars (although not specifically mentioned, believed to be Alpha, Bravo and slave radar Charlie) and their equipment including vehicles were RTA in accordance with the first phase of the Australian withdrawal from SVN. (AWM – 3-7-12) After the withdrawal of the radars, what happened to the radar operators can be summed up by the following statement from an ex Det 131 radar operator SVN;

"I was in the Dat from Jan 1970 at the time John Gorton announced staged withdrawal plans for the troops, resulting in 131 closing down the radar and returning some other equipment including vehicles. I remember cleaning all the local dirt out of everything to be returned as this was important for Australian quarantine purposes. One of the Landrovers was so hard to clean we painted it (over the dirt).

I remained on duty and ended up cruising with armoured, participating in protection parties and patrolling with the grunts including a night ambush operation. A group of us remaining 131 people also manned a forward observation post for a period in a bombed-out monastery on top of a small but steep hill called Dihn Co, near the Long Hai's. No radar but an infra-red searchlight, lots of fireflies and great views.

This was an active area with artillery rounds regularly going over the top and on one occasion machine gun rounds coming in from a grunt contact below. I believe that it was possibly at Dinh Co that 131 concluded its locating role in SVN" - Chris Chapple.



1970 - Monastery at top of Dihn Co. Photo: Richard Chaplin

1970 –
Moving Searchlight into position. Photo: Richard Chaplin



19 Aug - Appointment: Officer Commanding Det 131 (TFAIO) Captain Timothy R. Ford.
The Last Officer Commanding appointed to Det 131.
This was the end of the story for the radars but not for Det 131. The Sound Ranging Base closed in **October 70**, and during this period the Det Surveyors were transferred to 12 Fd Regt.

Records show that Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery (SVN) officially closed on 31 July 1971.

**This was such a great read – on reflection, I wish I'd done something similar.
Does anyone else have memories/recollections that they'd care to share?**

**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) –

“Paul.

The Minister has now finally, been personally briefed about my cause, and continues to give the submission very careful consideration.

It would be great for the 2,500 veterans to be able to apply and mount the RVCM in time for Vietnam Veterans Day this August.

Richard.

Paul Dickson

“Nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

. **Paul Dickson - I managed** to catch up with **Ian Campbell** for a 'quick' coffee in Sandringham, Melbourne. After never having met him face to face, only via ZOOM at Association meetings, it was great to get around to it.



...then a week later I caught up with this lot in Sydney at our usual stomping ground at the Royal Exhibition Hotel in Surry Hills –



L to R Grahame Dignam, Allen Morley, Bob Billiards, Vic Danko, Ernie Newbold, Kevin Browning, me and Ian Amos

Allen Morley added a p.s. – “Would you buy a used car from anyone here? Good to catch you Dicko.”



Diane and Keith Dean (“The Deans”) - ‘Hi Paul

Just wanted to share something with you.

In 1968 Keith lost track of one of his mates from 131, namely **Ezio "Benny" Lombardo**. They were in Vietnam together and after they returned home were both posted to 1RTB in Wagga. He has searched everywhere but could not locate him.

About 3 weeks ago Keith was scrolling through the 1RTB Facebook page and saw a comment from Ezio Bernardo. So, he messaged him. Lo and behold, it was his mate from 131.

They rang each other and chatted about old times.

We asked him why he was not on the 131 page. He did not know it existed. We got his permission to share his phone number with some of the other guys from the Battery.

He now lives in Perth, although his Facebook profile says he lives in Tasmania.

We hope he has now joined the Locators.”

ANOTHER LOCATOR LOCATED!!!

. Eddie Tricker has a question...

“G'day Paul,

I am wondering if any of the trained Unattended Ground Sensor blokes recall this

UGS (sensor) Implant Operation conducted from 17th to 21th April 1971, (includes travel time before and after Op).

Researching in front of writing this up, and it's the first and only reference I have seen to-date of a combined Ops.

All other UGS Implant Ops to this point in time had been conducted solely by D&E Platoon.

Source: AWM95, 1/4/217, HQ 1 ATF, Duty Officer's Log; 1-30 April 1971, PDF Page No: 145 / 214.

Sheet no: 121,.; Date: 18 April 1971; Serial No: 0956; Time: 18-1910H;

F/3 RAR Seagull.

1. We have a detachment of 131 Div Loc Bty plus D & E PI in our Loc.

They are going to plant sensor devices in vicinity of GR: YS 64-63.

2. Do the MSF know they are coming.

ACTION: 1. Answer: Yes. 2. Reconfirmed with XUYEN MOC and 3 RAR advised.

Any feedback from your members who may have knowledge of this, to my email address would be greatly appreciated

Kind regards

eddie t

PS I am assuming the Log entry is correct!

PPS This may have come from FSB Beth, where they stayed the night.”



Mail Out

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

← **Mail In** - Here are the responses...

. **John Vitkovsky** – “G'day Paul,

Nothing much to report here.

Have settled into our rancho at Victor Harbor and most things have been knocked into shape.

Naomi is in Melbourne for a week, having her yearly gallivant with girlfriends, so batching with the dog for company and enjoying leaving the toilet seat up and eating all the things I am told not to eat (or drink).

Active member of South Coast Veterans Assoc. - weekly get togethers for coffee, with the hard-core numbering 20 or more. Most are ex Infantry and there is one Submariner, a couple of Airforce and Navy blokes.

Starting to get the knack of ocean fishing - all my fishing in the last 25 years has been in lakes and rivers.

My 12-year-old grandson, in Brisbane, is flying down here on 1st April - yes, by himself and with his own passport, would you believe, for a week.

Then in second week of April, Naomi, the dog and I are heading north with caravan to do the top end lap for a couple of months for a bit of Barra fishing and pig shooting, and a few cool drinks... Hope things dry out up there with all the floods.

Was at the Murray Mouth a week ago and saw the biggest collection of old restored Valiants ever. Beautiful things - see pic.

Hope all is well. John V.”



. **Ian Campbell** – “Hi Paul, received your email some time back, apols for the late reply.

Been busy over the New Year holiday. Booked a place down at Lorne with daughter and her family. This includes 18-month-old granddaughter so a bit non-stop. Surfing every afternoon and then had a quiet couple of beers on the lifesaving club balcony. To quote Darryl from The Castle ‘Ahhh The Serenity”.

Got lucky with a trade ticket to the Avalon Air Show so no issues with overcrowding as happened on the public days.

Standing so close to the F35 as it flew low over the runway, then it turned skywards and went into a vertical climb. Got to look through a Chinook, looks the same as back in our day. Or has my memory faded?

Need to get off my arse and buy your book.

The pics of your trip to town festival look amazing. Anything like the Mardi Gras from Sydney?

Take care Paul, see you online.

Ian.”

. **John Richmond** – ‘Hi Paul.

Nice to receive your message.

Only just did the maths and realised it will be 57 years next month since we had our wings clipped and told we were to spend 2 glorious years as soldiers.

Seems like u are also like keeping the medical people from going broke.

I had the vampire job done yesterday, so when I get to see the medical oncologist (excuse the spelling) next week. After 7 years' treatment for prostate cancer another medical appointment seems the same as the last.

They tell us this has been the coolest summer for some time. Although I notice Sydney has really copped it over the past few days.

I hope u have a a great trip back to Australia

See U, John”.

. **Ken Osborne** – “Dear Paul, I have been a little busy of late mainly in getting my wife to and from hospital, where she has been treated for a kidney problem that has involved several trips to Geelong and back. She had a faint/fall in October that resulted in me calling the ambulance. She did not want to go to the Urgent Care Centre but the ambos and myself convinced her it would not do any harm and it is just as well she did. They checked her out and did tests and found she had an infected kidney which left untreated could be fatal, so later that evening they flew her to Geelong where they had the facilities to treat the problem. After a week or so treating the infection they transferred her to Warrnambool and eventually back to Portland. Once the infection was cleared she had to return to Geelong to have the kidney operation

which was the removal of kidney stones (and they fixed up a lady problem at the same time), then back to Portland. After a week, the stent they had placed in her became infected, so off to Geelong she went again and another stay there until they sorted that all out. So, now she is home again, things are getting better (we hope). She is sick of travelling and hates flying, but in nearly all instances that is how they have shifted her from Portland to Geelong and bumpy ambulance rides from Geelong homewards.

After her fall at the insistence of my friends and my increasing mobility problem I have given up driving and it is a bit of a bugger but learning to cope with it. Have to hang onto things to get around and I am still trying to get VA's to come and assess me, but get the run-around as to what I should do, but I am pressing on. Just waiting for another department at VA' to come back to me at the moment. Had no problem with their Home Help mob, got sorted out with a 20-minute phone call, but getting the occupational therapist in to assess me is another story altogether.

So, enjoy your visit to NZ, have just been told one of my VV Artillery 1 Fd Regt friends Selwyn Williams and his wife are off to NZ also so you never know who you will run into, so take care keep well, regards Ken O."

. **Graham Williams** – "Hi Paul,

You should be well into your trip now so hope all is going well. Very little to report from here for a change, no mercy dashes to hospitals required and have been keeping busy working around the house which seems never ending. Still go to gym twice a week to keep the fitness levels where they should be but with so much to do home-wise the social life has been put on hold temporarily.

A couple of things worth mentioning Paul. Firstly, we are still receiving the bogus emails in your name from at least 3 people asking us to go onto a link to your photos. It is an instant delete at this end when they arrive every 3 weeks or so. Hopefully the membership is aware of this.

Secondly, can I ask you to get off an email to Gary Lovell..... nuidat10@bigpond.com

Gary has a number of stories regarding Detachment events occurring in 1969 that should be aired for all. He is not overly familiar with computers and asked if I could get in touch with you on his behalf. Once you are able to contact him and let him know what you can use and how to go about it Gary should be able to take it from there.

It should be most worthwhile I think. I have yet to decide on my movements for Anzac Day this year. It would seem a few of the regulars who attend the March in Brisbane will be travelling this year or going elsewhere. Still time for me to think about that anyway.

Have fun, enjoy your trip and time with friends and family.

Regards,

Graham Williams."

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



ANZAC DAY
Left No Forget

ANZAC Day 2023

Could we please get information as to locations and event details that are happening in your areas, so we can notify members in *March's Eyes & Ears*.

Paul Dickson 131eyesandears@gmail.com

Here's the first one...

. **Sydney Anzac Day** arrangements – **Allen Morley**

NSW RSL has advised of Anzac Day March arrangements.

Our start-up point is the same as for the last several marches. Our 131 spot is **Bent Street near Chifley Square**, so just look out for the 131 banner. Form up is scheduled for **9am**, but that never happens.

City Tattersalls Club in Pitt St is undergoing renovations so we are **lunching at 'The Barracks' located at 5-7 Barrack Street, Sydney at noon**. The Club is located between Clarence and York Streets, about 50m along on the left side of Barrack St.

Please let Allen Morley - awmorley@optusnet.com.au - know if you have any questions about the arrangements and whether you would like to join your fellow 131ers for lunch.

Coral/Balmoral services – 2023

The following was forwarded by Keith Ayliffe -

“Hello fellow veterans,

Below is an email from Vince. (102Bty) Trust you are keeping safe and well Vince.

For those who can't make it to Canberra and live in the Mornington area.

If interested please contact Vince as below.

Cheers and thanks to Vince and the Gunners.

JP. (Jack Parr).”

“G’day Jack, mate I know you are busy with Canberra but I thought I’d better let you know that like last year Coral/Balmoral vets have been invited by **Rosebud RSL** to a service and complimentary luncheon at the club on **Saturday 13 May at 11AM**. Anybody local who can’t make it to Canberra but wants to remember our fallen mates are most welcome to attend. At present, there are around 20 going, 1RAR and 3RAR boys plus Gunners, Tankies etc. just call me on 0418326569 to register. Hope all the boys enjoy your reunion. Regards Vince.”

...and the following was also forwarded by Keith...

F. S. B. Coral Reunion 2023 55 th Anniversary - Canberra 12 & 13 May 2023

1. LAST POST CEREMONY AWM

The Australian War Memorial (AWM) conducts a Closing/Last Post Ceremony every day, commencing at 4.45pm. On Friday 12 May 23 they will feature one of ours that was killed at Coral

2. MEET & GREET

This will now take place in the heart of the City on the evening of Friday 12 May 2023 in the function room at the NOVOTEL Hotel 65 Northbourne Avenue, from 6.00pm until 9.00pm.

3. MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service for the Battle of Coral / Balmoral will be held at the Australian National Vietnam Memorial on ANZAC parade, Canberra on Saturday 13 May 23 commencing at 1030am.

4. REUNION LUNCH

This year it was decided by the committee to hold our main reunion function as a lunch. This will take place on the afternoon of Saturday 13 May 2023 at the Ainslie Football Club: 52 Wakefield Ave, Ainslie between the hours of midday to 4.00pm. Our usual commemorative ceremony will be conducted.

The meal will include an alternative serve main course plus dessert. Drinks are also included.

Buses will be available to move from the Vietnam Memorial to the Ainslie Football Club at an additional cost of \$5 a head, payable with registration.

5. REGISTRATION

We are required to advise the venue of final number four weeks prior to the event, so we require your registration by WED 05 April 2023.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM AND RETURN BY 05 APR 23 TO

Ray Curtis

7/9 Coral Drive

Jerrabomberra NSW 2619

Email: rosandray4@bigpond.com

6. COST

The cost for the Reunion is \$100 a Single and \$195 a Couple. This includes one raffle ticket per person. The Novotel Hotel and Ainslie Football Club are the best value for money of all the venues check out by the Organising Committee. The cost at both venues includes venue hire and use of A/V equipment. At other venues, these were an additional cost.

7. PAYMENT

Payment can be made by Cheque or Australia Post Money Order made out to Coral Reunion,

You can also pay by electronic transfer. If you are using this method ensure you include your name in the process.

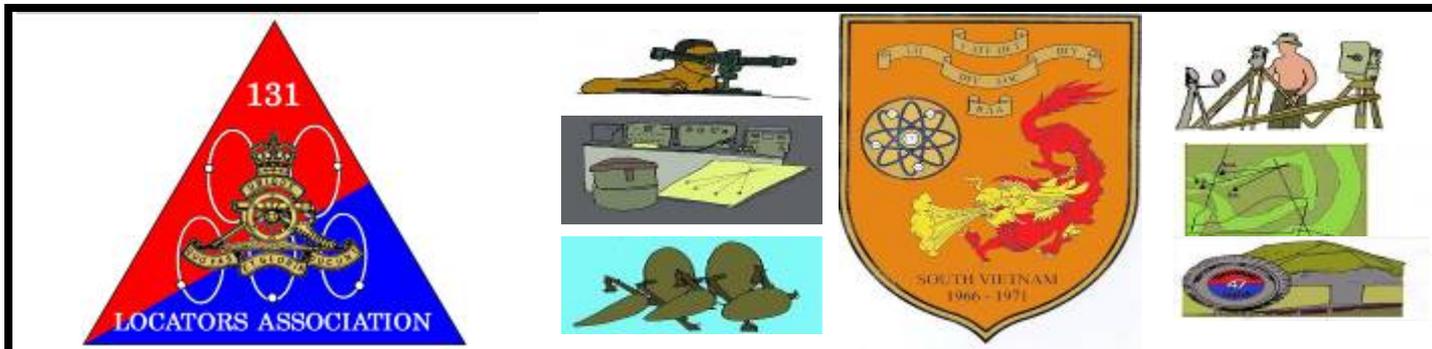
Account details are:

St George Bank

Account Name: Coral Reunion
BSB 112-908
Account No. 002103134

Contact details:

Coord/Treasurer Ray Curtis No7 of 9 Coral Drive Jerrabomberra NSW 2619 E: rosandray4@bigpond.com	Committee Member(Web) Alan (Jack) Parr 5 Laura Close Rockyview QLD 5032 parralan@hotmail.com	Committee Member Bryan (Jazza) Smith 416/91 Anzac Parade Redcliffe QLD 4701 bajjsmith42@websheild.net.au
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Committee members:

President – Allen Morley, Vice President – Bert Blink, Treasurer/Secretary – Grahame Dignam,
Webmaster – Bob Billiards, Research Officer – Ernie Newbold, Designs and Development Officer – Nick Proskurin,
Eyes & Ears Editor – Paul Dickson
General members – Ian Amos, Ged Carroll, George Lane.
Regional Representatives: ACT – Bert Blink, Qld – Terry Erbs, SA - Geoff Blackwell,
Vic – Alan Adams, Vic Nth – Ron Mason, WA - Barry Guzder
<http://www.131locators.org.au>

Presidential perambulations

The world certainly has become digitally focussed although there are some kickbacks now being experienced. We had a storm recently and our modem died after the power was off for some hours. Modem was replaced in a day, but then getting everything operational again was not so speedy. As part of the sorting out process, I was offered a deal. A new android phone for \$1 per month and in the monthly access component, a 25% reduction.

So, I took it up.

However, getting the new phone sorted with the provider was just a little difficult. My printer was proving non-talky and the IP kept sending me new passwords each day so that I could renew my payments via card. Transferring my old phone contents was straightforward, except for my emails which stubbornly refused to cooperate.

Then on a recent Saturday evening my wife and I dined at a delightful steak restaurant in Sydney CBD. We had received a Christmas 2019 voucher which Covid made challenging to use. But, use it we did. We sat down at the table and a waiter appeared with a small wooden box. "All phones in here please," he instructed. Your box will be locked and here is your key. So, in a pretty crowded restaurant there were not out-of-box phones in use. That seemed a pretty good idea, although the restaurant was fairly dark, so my phone torch – not a bloody flashlight - would have been handy for reading the wine list and menu.

Allen.

50 Years
April 1966 - April 2016



The Memories Remain
1966 - 1971



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

131 Locators Association Meeting: Date: Tuesday, 14^h March, 2023 at 1105hrs...

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

Attendees were: Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam, Bob Billiards, Gordon Malcolm, Nick Proskurin, Ernest Newbold Merv Nairn and ZOOM attendees were: Ron Mason and Terry Erbs

Apologies: Apologies were received from Ged Carroll, Paul Dickson, Ian Amos, Steve Wynn, Laurie Sawyer, Barry Guzder, Bert Blink, Rieny Nieuwenhof, Warwick Brooker, George Lane, other State Reps and Jim Fitzgerald.

Financial Membership Financial Membership is currently **131** plus, Associates **2**, plus, Affiliates **15** Total **148** Plus Lapsed as at 1/03/2023 **31**.

Presidents report.

Allen referenced:

- . The details of the Sydney ANZAC DAY march provided by the RSL of NSW. He advised that he had provided a synopsis of Det 131 activities and roles performed in SVN for television commentary during the March.
- . The new QLD Banner was well advanced and will be available before the end of the month.
- . Luncheon of Anzac Day will be at the City Tatts Barrack St. restaurant. Numbers will be required prior contact SecTreas via email.
- . Links to our website from the Historical Company website are now working.
- . A lunch meeting with Paul Dickson is arranged Royal Exhibition Hotel Chalmers St, cnr of Devonshire St., 1230 on 24th March?

Public Officer Report.

Gordon tabled the receipt for \$50.77 as required by Services NSW for out AGM report.

Webmaster Update.

- . Webmaster Bob advised Facebook now has 396 members and that the Newsletter had 168 hits.

Health Report:

- . Gordon is continuing his treatment.
- . Allen has had a check-up after his OP and Dr is happy.
- . Grahame and Merv Nairn are recovering well from recent issues.
- . Bob has been approached to relate his personal military story to an archivist.
- . Victor Danko advised that he was currently in WA and was meeting Gnr Ross Gunnell for a catch-up lunch on Wednesday (15 March). Stay well ROSCOE!!

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

- . Terry advises that the Regiment is preparing for the future and is planning to reserve certain artifacts for local heritage reasons.
- . News from a military magazine confirms that a new Battery will be raised and be based in Woodside SA
- . Ern Newbold raised a point previously spoken about regarding placing some of the public photos we have gathered over time depicting life within Det 131 in SVN and progressively load them onto the website in a new gallery. Bob agreed the project was possible and would create activity for the website.

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, 11th April, 2023 at 1100hrs
Venue: Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club 26 Humphries Rd, Wakeley NSW 2176.
 And available via Zoom link



. Birthdays in the Battery...April –

Date	NAME	REGT NO	SVN In	SVN Out	COMMENTS
1	DES SPENCER	3787905	03 01 1967	13 12 1967	
1	IAN MORRIS Capt.	243062	10 03 1970	09 07 1970	RAEME
	" "		09 07 1970	11 03 1971	106 Fd Wkshp
2	HILTON HOLLOWAY	1736606	16 12 1970	03 05 1971	131
	" "		03 05 1971	26 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
4	KEVIN "Soul" MAKER	2251507	26 08 1969	13 08 1970	† 24.05.2020
4	WILLIAM LAUGHLIN	2788465	13 01 1969	27 08 1969	

7	JOHN McFADDEN	2783243	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	
7	DAVID MARTIN	2781662	22 04 1966	29 04 1967	
8	RICHARD BRISTOW	1733143	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	
8	LEON DJATSCHENKO	312532	26 08 1969	13 08 1970	
9	TERRENCE MYERS	217798	08 05 1969	30 04 1970	
11	MICHAEL McDONNELL	2781377	04 05 1966	11 04 1967	
11	TERRENCE FOX	1200934	08 07 1968	02 07 1969	
12	KEVIN BEVANS	3798316	10 02 1971	07 06 1971	131
	" "		07 06 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt
14	RONALD ARTHUR HARRIS	5510968	18 06 1968	17 01 1969	† 07.01.69 2nd SAS Sqd
15	RIENY NIEUWENHOF	3798241	10 02 1971	05 08 1971	
19	RON ROYAL WO2	23552	02 03 1967	20 02 1968	† 01.05.2002
19	PETER CLARKE	3792212	11 11 1968	27 08 1969	
19	BARRY DYSON	3795956	03 06 1970	04 03 1971	
20	ANTHONY TURNER	1202849	27 01 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "		01 07 1971	15 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
21	JEFFREY BASSFORD	2792419	29 04 1970	14 04 1971	† 19.06.2022
21	NEVILLE DAVIS	5716997	11 02 1971	12 08 1971	
22	BARRY CAMPTON Capt.	61270	{14 07 1963	22 07 1963	
	" "		{13 08 1966	28 04 1967	
22	MARK SZYPULSKI	313270	19 08 1970	17 03 1971	† 03.11.2016
	" "		18 03 1971	29 07 1971	131
23	MURRAY SMALE	5411587	27 11 1967	20 08 1968	
24	JOHANNES LAS	3792338	23 09 1968	18 06 1969	
25	KEVIN BANKS	3794366	27 11 1969	04 06 1970	
25	QUENTON KNIGHT	2412578	09 12 1968	24 09 1969	† 18.01.2020
26	GRAHAME DIGNAM	2784745	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
26	WILLIAM CROWTHER	215416	22 04 1966	02 11 1966	† 14.01.2020
27	GERALD YOUNG Maj.	311460	{06 03 1967	04 04 1967	RAEME
	" "		{25 05 1967	22 06 1967	RAEME
28	GARY LOVELL	218160	08 05 1969	30 04 1970	
29	RON MASON	3787154	04 05 1966	03 03 1967	
29	KEVIN THORNTON	2781420	04 05 1966	02 02 1967	
29	BERNARD ERICA	3787334	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	† 23.11.2016
29	PETER FUHRMANN	3789807	21 06 1967	02 04 1968	
30	IAN McMILLAN	215117	15 07 1970	09 09 1970	

*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 is looking decidedly better, but still not acceptable! Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

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

. **Located...**

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



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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