

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

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



18th August – Vietnam Veterans Day
Marked the 50th Years since the
cessation of Australia's involvement
in the War.

Detachment's plaque at the AWM – placed and
dedicated 4th May 2012.

The following are extracts from the activities on Vietnam Veterans Day from around the Grounds...

. **Grahame Dignam** – supplied the following from the Ceremony in Canberra...



Our wreath was proudly laid by Grahame Dignam on behalf of ALL the Members of the 131 Locators Association



Above: The Vietnam Memorial



Left: Matt Alberton (George Lane's son), George Lane and Ernie Newbold

Peter Ravelje adds photos for the Canberra Ceremony and beyond...



The Honourable Gunner Peter Ravelje, Esq.
(Speech was declined due to "X rating"..

At right -
"The 4x Peter Platoon 1969-70!" –
left to right
- Peter Bennett, Peter Ravelje,
Peter Bremner and Peter Meaney.



. **Rieny Nieuwenhof** – “About 100 Vietnam veterans, family and friends commemorated Vietnam Veterans Day in Geelong. The weather remained kind for this time of year. Rieny.”



Today over 100 Vietnam veterans, family, friends and special guests gathered at the Vietnam memorial to commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day, also known as Long Tan day. John Delia spoke of his experiences as a Squadron Leader with the RAAF. The ceremony also featured members of the 8/7 Royal Victorian Rifles, Alpha Company and bugler Bailey.

A Note: Ed (aka Paul Dickson) was disappointed by the non-coverage by the Australian press media of the event.

. **Allen Morley** sent in the following as a precursor to the events that took place on the 18th –

“In recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and Victory in the Pacific, three ex-131ers attended a Service of Remembrance at the Canterbury- Hurlstone Park RSL on Sunday 13th August.

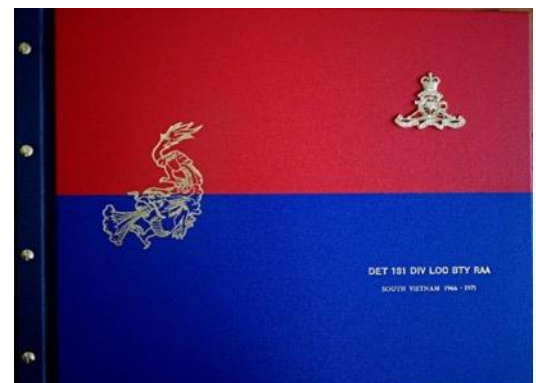
Gunner **Ernest Newbold** (ret'd) presented a Vietnam Veteran's Address to the audience of more than 100. Ernie spoke of his experiences in South Vietnam and talked of the ongoing mateship engendered by the 131 Locators Association.

At the lunch after the ceremony, the ARVN Veterans Association - NSW presented **Ernie, Grahame Dignam and Allen Morley** with a badge and a certificate thanking us for our service. As guests lunched some of Ernie's photos were displayed on the screens near the stage. Ernie's visual display can be found at cmnl.com.au.
Allen Morley”



*Click on the link cmnl.com.au and scroll down to “The Communal Ode”

. **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.





Give me a Name?

The “Lost Locator Project”

This Project is being re-ignited for 2022.

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

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

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

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

Paul Dickson

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

. David Dougherty....

Hi Paul,

The first time in 50 years maybe that I have looked at the Australian Women's Weekly and looking through the index of August 2023 issue was the heading “Tour of Duty” which references the entertainers.

In it was the attached photo. If my memory serves me correctly this was when the 131 boys who side-tracked Denise Drysdale and Patti McGrath. If so those present at the time may be interested to know it has hit the “news”. Regards, David'



The group in the photographs - **A Band Member, Bruce Irvine, Patty McGrath, Ian Yerbury, Denise Drysdale, John Vitkovsky and Joe Clendinen**



SAN/67/891/VN Oct 67
Troops from the 1st Australian Task Force here at Mai Dat, Vietnam, chat with local women.

A note: It's a shame the “typing at the bottom of the black and white photo is not legible. It also begs the question as to “Who took the original photo?”

. Unknown Dates of Deaths continues to be updated...as at 31.08.2023 -

A continuing Reflective Thought with regards to Vales as we progress on in years.

The following table reflects Members passings over the years since our 'journeys' into South Vietnam which began back in May 1966.

It reflects on 10 year periods since, and including, 1966. The figures speak for themselves, and if you exclude deaths in SVN, of which there were two, the initial period does show a dark period considering the ages of our mates.

10 Year Detachment/131 Battery Death Periods

										<u>Total</u>
1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	
1	0	2	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	10
1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	
0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	6
1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
0	0	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	11
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
3	2	2	2	0	3	2	1	2	2	19
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
0	6	4	5	3	9	6	6	6	3	48
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
8	4	5	5	6	7	11	5	0	0	51
Unknowns*										3
Total										148

Please note that these figures represent data provided by Members, from what was, and is stated to be reliable sources (official notices/family/mates etc). Data as at **05.08.2023**.

*Unknowns – Sadly, we have only been advised of the Members' passings only.
Here are the names and details –

Name	Rank	Regt No	Section	SVN	DoB	DoD
Lempa, Helmut	L/Bdr	38120	Radar	1966-67	18.10.46	Unknown
Robinson, Marcus Lee	Gnr	2791229		1970	14.02.48	Unknown
Robinson, Edward "Ted"	WO2	1411329	Radar	1968-69	11.08.49	Unknown

If you can help in any way to update this data it would be greatly appreciated – You can send information to Paul Dickson at email 131eyesandears@gmail.com Subject: Vale update

Ed - As a closing thought, can we give some thought to completing Locator Profiles, which do add a personal background and also keeping in touch as it keeps us up to date with you and mates.

Iain Kennedy – aka Detective Kennedy, supplied the following updates for second name and complete Date of Birth for Quentin below

McNaughton, Quentin John	Pvt	615726	Catering Corp	N/a	04.04.47	09.07.07
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Great work, again, Iain – some more of the gaps are being filled, Paul

. 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

Ernie Newbold relates a recent experience which has developed into a great story expansion by the Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL...

"G'day Paul,

Two years ago my RSL Sub Branch decided to publish a book celebrating their 90th anniversary. It was considered that waiting for their centenary would possibly be too late to interview the veterans who were still with us. A guy named Neil Cadigan was organised to interview veterans and write their stories for the book.

I went along with some of my digitised images and in due course the book was published.

Since then I was asked by the RSL Club Limited to supply more images in preparation for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam War, at least as far as Australia's involvement was concerned.

What is now on Facebook is available for people to read and so I copied it over to the 131 Facebook page as I thought it may be of interest to, or even helpful to some of our fellow locators who also served in South Vietnam.

On the 13th August the club held a special commemoration event to commemorate VP day (Victory in the Pacific) and Vietnam Veterans Day as a dual commemoration. Currently on screens around the club there is a photo presentation showing my digitised images from Vietnam in 1967 - 68 basically the first public showing of images of the Detachment's roll in SVN that I am aware of.

It is strange, in many ways, because although I joined the Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club and Sub Branch back in 1975 or thereabouts I never bothered to become involved with the Sub Branch until a few years ago due to work and other commitments at that time. It was only when the news of the NSW state president, Don Rowe, was making headlines that I questioned whether I still wanted to remain a member of the RSL. So, I duly went along to attend my first ever RSL Sub Branch meeting and met a lot of lovely, friendly people who welcomed me. Before long I was asked if I would be prepared to be a Trustee for the Sub Branch and here we are today.

If you go to the Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club website and follow the prompts to the 50th Anniversary of the ending of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War you may find more than what they extracted for the Facebook page. Regards, Ernie.'



We pay special tribute to the Veterans of the Vietnam Conflict. The efforts of those past and present will forever be remembered.

We thank you all for your service.

Ernest Newbold Reflects

Ernest Newbold is a proud Vietnam Veteran, a Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club Sub-Branch Member and Trustee. We thank Ernest for the honour of having him feature in our 2023 CMNL film '**our communal ode**', and for his contribution to our 2021 publication '**Celebrating 90 Years of Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Sub-Branch**'. An excerpt from his story published here.

50 years on from the end of the Vietnam War, Ernest continues to nurture connections to members of his unit, and many other fellow veterans. He looks forward to the occasions that bring them together, and is looking forward to gathering with fellow veterans and family at the 50th Anniversary Vietnam Veterans Day Services, both at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra, and at The Bert Crook Memorial, Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club this August.



Ernest Newbold (left) ANZAC Day 2023, gathered with fellow veterans and family at The Bert Crook Memorial Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club.

1966 - At the age of 20, Ernest was required to register for National Service and in a random selection, by way of a tray of numbered marbles, he was selected by his date of birth. Although the conscription was controversial at the time, **he was happy enough to be selected for his contribution, and the experience.**

1967 - After months of training, and the best part of 12 months of dutiful skilled service in Vietnam where he held great purpose, **Ernest was sent home to return straight back to his old routine**, in the office. During this time the focus was on recruitment and training, not those leaving out the back gate, and simply had to readjust to the norms of society.

1975 - The decade that followed was difficult, with little occasion to reconnect with his unit, and share conversations with like-minded people. Ernest continued to apply his learned strong sense of duty, hard work and commitment in his employment, and struggled to sleep well and retain work life balance.

In 1975 he became a member the Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Sub Branch, where he made and retained new connections, and had a new purpose.

1987 - After the 1987 'welcome home' where units were required to march in groups, **Ernest's unit started gathering regularly "even if only on ANZAC Day, it was not long enough"** When you talk with people you served with, they understand the feelings and experience more than your family would. The mention of a name. . . it takes you back..

1996 - **It wasn't until some 30 years following his service that Ernest began receiving support.** He had gained awareness of the mental health issues he had been living with. He was encouraged by a fellow veteran that he had met at work to reach out to Veteran Affairs for assessment and support. In those days the support was medical and financial, but not a lot of practical support was available.

2013 - There were few opportunities to reunite, as the Sub-Branches operated by geographic location, not unit. Around a decade ago, **Ernest and a couple of veterans from his unit decided to form their own association '131 Locators' and raised the flag to to be seen and found by their fellows.** This resulted in being found by old mates, and regular gatherings at an RSL Club local to one of the members.

2023 – a time to reflect

Ernest has many a story to share about his Nui Dat (small hill) listening posts, shared tent quarters and out in the field. Over a coffee Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club **he shared many of those stories, including the time he and his unit built their own place to gather at**, as his unit were positioned in separate posts across many small hills.

**"The RSL is a nice place to gather, I am now involved and have met a great group of people.
I look forward to the special events to connect and share stories, whenever they occur"**



Left: Ernest Newbold – Trustee, Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club Sub-Branch



At right: Ernest and his mates digging for the sand they needed for the concrete slab for the original '131 Locators' recreational tent. Their unit was positioned all over the 'small hills', and here they would gather to connect & share their stories.

**This story is an excerpt from our 2021 publication.
Celebrating 90 Years of Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Sub-Branch
Authored by Neil Cadigan**

Ernest Newbold shares his story



Ernest Newbold The Vietnam Conscript

Ernest Newbold is like many Vietnam War veterans in that he was called up for service without choice as a “nasho”, plunged into jungle warfare in Asia after less than 12 months of training, carrying out an important war role then, overnight, was expected to mingle back into normal society without a skerrick of assistance or a street parade of appreciation.

He confesses he had a hangover from the experience for years. He felt a lack of purpose after performing such as vital wartime role amid the constant sound of gunfire, planes above and sudden calls to action, then being expected to morph back into a rather sedate life as an accountant.

Newbold, who joined the RSL (Enfield branch) in 1968 and became a Canterbury-Hurlstone Park member in 1975, is one of thousands of Vietnam vets who are finally generally accepted by fellow veterans within the RSL ranks, although most have sought solace and security through battalion or unit-based or Vietnam-specific associations.



For Ernest Newbold, raised at Croydon Park and educated at Fort Street High School, his ten months in Vietnam had a telling impact on him that continues four and a half decades later. He proudly talks about the tasks his unit carried out and rarely misses an Anzac Day annual reunion while being an active member of a strong 131 Locators Association, formed in 2008 and made up of about 150 members who served the 131 Divisional Locating Battery unit over the years (not just in Vietnam).

Ernest's name was called in the first lottery ballot when compulsory national service was introduced by the Robert Menzies-led Liberal government in 1965 for selected men aged 20. Because he was studying accountancy and commercial law, Ernest was able to defer his service by a year. He remembers walking into the enlistment centre in Sydney in April 1966, just a few paces from fellow conscript Doug Walters, the young Test cricketer, as protesters from Save Our Sons, a well-organised group of objecting mothers, waved their placards outside. After training at the newly built Singleton base, then Holsworthy, North Head and Canungra in the Gold Coast hinterland for jungle training, he departed Sydney on 4 May 1967 on a chartered Ansett DC-6B to Darwin. After an overnight stop, his unit of reinforcements boarded an RAAF Hercules to Vung Tau in Vietnam, the army's main logistics centre.



Ernest and his tent mates gather over his foot-locker at the top of the hill.

Ernest receiving a haircut from Lance Bombardier Victor Danko at Listening Post No. 3.



He'll never forget those initial few hours in a war zone. "I remember my first night in Vietnam, with artillery and mortars firing endlessly. None of us got much sleep with the firing going all night." All these years later though, Ernest and his army mates from those days still cannot categorically recall how they travelled next day from Vung Tau to the operations epicentre at Nui Dat, which can only be a signal of the psychological shock they were suffering. "Most of us can't remember how we travelled, although we recall the trip on the Hercules from Darwin. We are pretty certain now we went by RAAF Caribou, although some swear we went by truck. But I know I never travelled on an army truck in Vietnam so the consensus is we went by Caribou.

There's a blank piece of memory there that you just can't recall. I think it was the fact we actually landed and had our feet on the ground in Vietnam and it was all going on around us; there were helicopters and lots of military aircraft going overhead and it's like . . .

"We're really here, it's happened. We didn't know what to expect – it was a shock to arrive there and to get our heads around the fact we were in the middle of a war. We'd never lived under artillery like we did in Vietnam."



Yet Ernest can remember vividly many aspects of his service: locations, exercises, the equipment and the visit by a group of entertainers including Patti McGrath, Denise Drysdale, Lorraine Desmond and the band The Strangers, all of whom he was fortunate to have lunch with just before Christmas 1967. As the nominated chief photographer for his



group, his images are maintained on old Kodachrome colour film (and long since digitised).

Patti McGrath, later to become Patti Newton, was a popular entertainer of troops in Vietnam.

Patti during a visit before Christmas 1967.

The main purpose of his unit, the 131 Divisional Locating Battery, was to detect enemy mortars and the position they were firing from so they could organise counter battery fire to neutralise the enemy onslaught and put them out of action. They could also dig into a mortar crater, record the angle of descent and a direction and what sort of mortar it was and calculate the likely position it was fired from.

Ernest's deployment was sandwiched between two momentous battles from the Vietnam conflict – Battle of Long Tan in August 1966 and the Battle of Coral-Balmoral in May 1968. He arrived on 4 May 1967 and returned to Sydney on 30 January 1968. He went from a trainee accountant just out of his teens to a man hardened to the noise of surrounding mortars and air attack. And then, at the end the most eventful and adrenalin-filled chapter of his life, it was thank you very much and **"as you were"**, knowledgeable in what you're doing, you're not needed anymore".

"And another group of blokes go over and go through the same process of putting their knowledge into practical experience and learning all about it. That was a bit of an odd thing. We did our final roll call and parade and were told, 'As from midnight tonight you're civilians and no longer needed.' If I'd been in regular army I would have remained with people I'd been with and still done military activities or stayed in Vietnam; either way I'd have continued military routine and discipline. Instead, we were supposed to suddenly switch off and be a civilian like nothing had happened.



Homeward bound ... Newbold (second from right) and with those in his unit ready to leave Vietnam. Within 24 hours they were in Sydney, left to adapt the best they could to civilian life.

Gunner Ernest Newbold at Luscombe Field, Nui Dat, waiting for an RAAF Caribou to land to fly to Saigon from where he would depart Vietnam for home in late January 1968.



"It wasn't until quite a few years later that I realised how much having been away and **serving your country in a theatre of world gave you a tremendous sense of purpose**, greater than any sense of purpose you'd experienced in your previous life," he reflected. "Suddenly, that's all gone and you're back to being a civilian and trying to get back to a sense of purpose and it took a long time to come to grips with that. This affects people today still, I'm sure."

He also believes the unusual sleep patterns he's suffered for years are a legacy of his national service. He would work long hours and look forward to weekend leisure time only to find he would sleep intermittently but never for long periods. After consulting a psychologist he realised it was a throwback to shifts of two hours on and four hours off while in Vietnam and always subconsciously being on alert for an unexpected call to action. After discovering further psychological issues that had lain dormant, he was eventually granted a totally and permanently incapacitated (TPI) pension and was diagnosed as having "war-caused anxiety disorder with comorbid depression", part of the family of PTSDs.

"For many years I thought there was nothing wrong with me, I'm normal. Then, in 2003, someone showed me a book about PTSD which had a list of bullet points and he said, 'How many of them to relate to you?' Two-thirds did. He said, 'Everyone thinks they are okay but you don't understand what war service does to you.'"

Ernest was 60 when he was forced to leave his job, took six months off and then was allocated a TPI. He is thankful for the comfort of a network of countrymen who served in similar circumstances to him.

"I admit I'm more interested in belonging to the Vietnam Veterans Association and my unit association where we meet once a month. But the RSL has been there for a long time." **I still see the need for the RSL to exist. Basically, the RSL supports veterans of all eras** – I don't know exactly how anymore other than through war veterans' homes and the like, but I think it is important the RSL is there to speak and put their case forward when they need to say something. They represent a century of the history of war veterans."

"But it needs to find ways to attract the current crop of veterans who are returning and give them something they can identify with and benefit from."

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) –

A note from Richard Barry AOM...

Good afternoon folks,
You are well aware about the situation for a cohort of ex-National Service Vietnam Veterans and the RVCM. Meanwhile, this Media Release has been prepared for the Quest and distributed. It may be useful for you.
Kind regards
Richard Barry OAM



MEDIA RELEASE August 2023 VIETNAM VETERANS'DAY

Never leave a mate behind.

Military ethos

As the sun rises on Friday 18 August, many of the 60,000 Australians who served in Vietnam will be looking forward to the day, which this year also commemorates the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. They will proudly wear their full array of medals during the activities around the country to reflect on the bravery, teamwork, and endurance that Australians displayed throughout the war, and to honour and recognise every individual who served in Vietnam. That is only right and proper.



Not so some 2,500 National Service conscripts, who, if they choose to or are still able to attend, may face opprobrium and offensive questioning by others, including friends and family, and worst of all, even ostracism as 'short timers' from some of their former comrades-in-arms, in clubs and pubs, simply because they do not wear the Republic of Vietnam's Campaign Medal (RVCM), pictured. That is definitely not right or proper. Must it really continue in this way?

Despite having served just as bravely as their comrades, they have not been equally respected, honoured and recognised and have long been denied the campaign medal which was made available to all military allied personnel who served meritoriously in support of the Republic of Vietnam. Eligibility is determined by Australian authorities. The denial came about due to an unforgivable government blunder many years ago.

This legalistic and bureaucratic denial is solely because they returned home for discharge at the completion of their obligatory National Service period of enlistment, before completing 181 days' service in the Vietnam War. Contrast this with the fact that even non-combatant philanthropists were given this medal. How unfair and inequitable is that? From day one in Vietnam, they also faced all the horrors of war. They did their duty to the maximum according to law and had no obligation at all to put off their return back to work, study and family and risk their repatriation entitlements. As highly respected senior army veteran "Warry" George Mansford said: "they were exposed to the battle cry of 'all for one and one for all.' In simple terms; to live together, fight together and perhaps die together."

Those who were killed or wounded did, of course, receive the RVCM.

The previous Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, with agreement from the then-Minister for Defence, had recommended that approval of the issue of the RVCM go to whole of government consideration, when the election intervened. We were nearly there.

After more than a year in office of the current government, today's Minister is fully aware of this distressing situation and of the hundreds of people: politicians of all colours, ex-service people and especially Australia's ex South Vietnamese servicemen and the community, who strongly support these men. The now-Attorney General, Mark Dreyfus even wrote: 'I can assure you that Federal Labor supports your campaign to have the RVCM awarded , on the grounds of individual justice, fairness and equity.' Other Ministers and ex-Ministers and even ex-Prime Ministers all wrote in the same vein. It is unconscionable that it continues even now.

This continued denial and lack of recognition has led to even deeper withdrawal into isolation, contributed to frustration, despair and worse; even for those who were not already suffering from war caused PTSD that is now being aggravated by their own government's obstinance and unreasonable delay in seeing them equally and properly recognised. This must stop.

Time is now of the essence and Minister Keogh has the power to resolve this matter for the benefit of these veterans. As the sun sets on another Vietnam Veterans' Day, will their Minister have stood up and made a decision? Did he act equitably and empathetically and show determined leadership to let these veterans now have this medal?

It would be an immense contribution to our armed forces of tomorrow.

Contact: Author ©: Bert Hoebee Mobile: 0419218293

Quest Facilitator: Richard Barry OAM Mobile: 02 6792 3114

Paul Dickson

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Mail Call...

Ernie Newbold G'day Paul & Bert,

Late news. Recently a photo appeared on a Facebook page relating to Australian Vietnam matters.

The photo showed a Gunner (named as **Ben Lombardo**) on top of Nui Dat, looking to the west through a pair of binoculars, the photo from the Australian War Memorial was taken in 1967 by Army photographer, Mike Coleridge.

I checked the Vietnam Nominal Roll and found that Ben Lombardo is not listed!

Then when Suzanne Harms re-posted the same photo on our Facebook page, I decided to go back into the Nominal Roll of Vietnam veterans for another look, still no mention of Ben Lombardo. So I was intrigued to try again so I searched for the name "Lombardo" using the timeframe for when the photographer, Mike Coleridge was in Vietnam. This time, Bingo!!! there were two Lombardos listed and one of them served with Det 131 Div Loc Bty... Our guy was **Ezio Bernard Lombardo** and he served with the Detachment from 20th May 1966 to 3rd Mar 1967. He is on our birthday list as Ezio Lombardo, born on 1st Mar 1946. It appears that the photographer used the wrong name or he could have been nicknamed "Ben".

Whatever, he served with our pioneers and I am sure some of them will remember Gnr. Lombardo and we now have a copy of his photo.

Having lived on top of Nui Dat for the second half of my tour of Vietnam the scenery shown in the photo was still very familiar to me and I am sure everyone else who was posted to 31-A would recognise it too.



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...

. **Darryl Musgrove** – "Hello Paul, Glad to hear you and Helen are enjoying life.

The local media never reports any good news anymore – it's all doom and gloom. Stories from Mexico, the one's I watch anyway, relate to railways and concentrate lately on the Copper Canyon, on the South West and Pacific Coast. Tourist oriented and hardly typical.

Back home Winter is doing its best to take the fun out of outdoor activities, unless you enjoy the cold. Not for me I am afraid, too much like Tianjara when the guns arrived.

I always enjoy your monthly reports and look forward to the beginning of each Month. Regards."

. **Ron Mason** – "G'day Paul, your travel up north sounds interesting, found quite a few of the mentioned places on the map. I guess you flew to Canada.

All is going along here very quietly, enough rain to keep crops going at the moment but as always 🙌 till it is in the silo.. We have done very little this year, looks like the big adventure this year will be our trip to Canberra. Am looking forward to catching up with some of the gang. Numbers dwindle.

A good chance I will not get to join tomorrow's ZOOM as I will be in the Shepparton hospital for the day getting the IVIG treatment, just the one day in Shep instead of 2 days in Melbourne.

Have been talking to Peter Dealy, not sure if he will join the meeting for a short time as the Goulburn Valley VV will be lunching at Shep RSL prior to a meeting to put in place final details for VV Day in Shepparton.

On the Vietnam Veterans front – on the 3rd Aug a vigil was held at the graves of Vietnam Veterans who had died in Vietnam. The local Vietnam Veterans group attended the 2 graves in Shepparton and 1 at Tatura.

At the RSL Region meeting this morning there were reports from around the area about other graves in the north of Vic being cared for by RSL's and individuals. It was going to be a national "happening" – I haven't heard about other States. Well that's about all for the moment

Say Hi to everyone tomorrow & stay safe

Ron M."

. **Harry Lynas** - G'day Paul,

Just a couple of quick lines to let you know I am doing OK, it certainly sounds like you are.

Not much happening around here, still get down to the Fort whenever I can, but not driving anymore so have to rely on lifts.

I have not had a good time health wise this year but hopefully now that winter is nearly over I should get outside more in the garden and do a lot of pruning.

That's all for now, waiting for your next lot of queries.

Cheers Harry Lynas"

.Iain Kennedy – “Paul,

We are now well into the second half of the year and Janet and I have just returned from our drive to Canberra and back for the 50th Anniversary commemoration with some of our 131 colleagues. It was good, yet disappointing as it was so brief, only on catch up dinner and a couple of breakfast and it's all over. Was good to see Gordon Malcom and Ian Amos both of whom I've spent time in the trenches with. Grahame did a good job organising it all, I'm not sure everyone appreciated the hard work he put in to organise it all. Photo at ceremony.



Not sure if I told you Janet and I with Janet's sister went to North America in late May and early June. 3 weeks traveling around, LA, San Fran, NY, Boston, Toronto (inc Niagara Falls) and Vancouver. Needed a rest when we got back. That is our first trip since covid, so now the flood gates are opened. Couple of photos from Niagara and beyond



Booking for Malaysia and Thailand In October/November to visit Janet's cousins. Then a Cruise in March to celebrate my birthday. Cheers. Iain.”



. Russ Jackson – “Hello Paul,

Thank you for the mail. Great to hear of your travels and to know that you have been able to break the shackles of COVID.

My apologies for the lateness of a response but I have had another lengthy stay in hospital.

Two great Vietnam mates Graeme Owen and Jeff Schafer are keeping in touch as usual, which is great.

Stay well.

Best Regards to you and Helen.

Russ and Margot.”

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



Head of Regiment Order of the Day

By Brigadier D.J. Hill, AM

Captain-General of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

I have today received a message from The Master Gunner St James's Park informing me that His Majesty King Charles III has agreed to become Captain-General of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, succeeding in the role from his Mother, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

His Majesty will also fulfil this role for the Regiments of Royal Australian, Royal Canadian and Royal New Zealand Artillery. This is a great honour and continues a tradition established by His Majesty's Grandfather, King George VI, who at a dinner at Woolwich in 1950 expressed his desire to be Captain-General Royal Artillery rather than Colonel-in-Chief, a change in title that was effected in January, 1951. This also revived a rank originally dating from the 15th Century.

The Royal Regiment looks forward to establishing a close relationship with our new Captain-General as the Gunners look to a brave and exciting future.

Ubique,

11th August 2023

**The South Vietnamese award
"Cross of Gallantry with Palm"
UNIT CITATION emblem
has been awarded to us.**



The following information has been supplied by numerous sources – Ravelje, Ticker...

Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA has been included in the list of units awarded this citation – see the listing by clicking the “List of Army Units eligible....” below.

I suggest you read the “submit an application” section below and have your details ready, because if you do NOT complete it at one sitting your information is not retained.

For those of us alive 50 years after the end of the Vietnam War, you will see that finally, the South Vietnamese award “Cross of Gallantry with Palm” UNIT CITATION emblem has been awarded to us.

Additionally, it is also available to the relatives of deceased members, and for those who were KIA / WIA casualties whilst on Service.

I have also attached the Honours & Awards list of "Australian Army Units Eligible for the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation."

For HQ Coy & D&E Platoon. Headquarters 1 Task Force, (viz HQ 1 ATF) is shown at the bottom of page 2 on this document. D&E Platoon was a part of HQ 1 ATF.

Eligibility for Headquarters 1 Task Force covers the period: FROM 01 April 1966 TO 12 March 1972.

Look at this Honours & Awards Web Site Page for details of this Award.

<https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards/medals/foreign-awards/republic-vietnam-cross-gallantry-palm-unit-citation>

Below is the link to the PDF file listing all Units eligible with the qualifying periods. (But I have attached a copy of this for your info.)

[List of Army Units eligible for the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation \(PDF 191.07 KB\)](#)

This will take you to the master page

<https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards>

Application

Eligible individuals can [submit an application](#). Under ‘Application Type’ select Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with PUC.

Applications will be assessed against veteran service records and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans.

Personal records do not need to be supplied in order for Defence to assess an application for the Citation. The Directorate of Honours and Awards will make contact if further details are required.

Family members of deceased Vietnam veterans who may be eligible are asked to submit an application.

See [Granting of Unissued Service Awards of Deceased Members](#).

It's not that hard to apply.

Ernie Newbold – An IMPORTANT Note –

The award is the Unit Citation only to worn on the right breast, it is not another medal.

Ed – a comment on the Award and how proudly it should be worn, but I’ve found it hard to reconcile being awarded a “South Vietnamese” award, some 50 years after the fall of the South Vietnamese government, whom we supported.

A follow up Kevin Browning’s from an earlier request ...

Calling ALL Sensor Operators

Sensor Operators - Your Story needs to be Expanded

If you operated Sensors in Vietnam we need your help to flesh out your story. Eddie Tricker who was with D&E Platoon and involved in the early days of the sensor program is writing the story of sensors but needs the personal

stories of what you did. If you are interested in assisting please let Kevin Browning know. Eddie is happy to either call or email. Yours is a very special aspect of what the Detachment did in Vietnam and only you can tell it as it was.

My email is kb@artilleryguns.org.au or there's my contact phone is 0411 966 785.

Regards, Kevin

At right - Original Australian Unattended Ground Sensor Course participants – ARVN Signals School, Vung Tau – 10th – 11th July 1970 – **Stuart Telford (Late), Albert Jacka, John Lucas, Laurie Mion, Warren Jaenke, Geoff Carthew, John Brewer, Jeff Bassford (Late), Gary Navas (Late) and Richard Edwards**



THE EYES and EARS
1987-1989 (Vol 16 No 182) 1991-1993 (Vol 16 No 182)

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Official newsletter of the 131 Locators Association Inc. ABN 92 663 816 973
web site: <http://www.131locators.org.au> Supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs

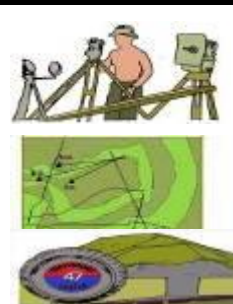
Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA
Unit Citation for Gallantry (UCG) awarded to the Detachment and those who served at
The Battles of Coral/Balmoral in South Vietnam, 1968

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

An Eyes & Ears Notification...

September, 2023's edition, Vol 16 No 9 September 2023 No 182 will be published early, somewhere around 12th September. So, if you want to contribute/communicate, don't mess around as the input deadline will be 10th September.

Ed – I'm out and about for a month.



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

My last perambulation mentioned my pending trip to the US. That went too quickly, but there were some highlights and lowlights. When I arrived at Sydney airport there was a text message to advise of a long delay for my flight. Some compensation came in the form of a voucher. Unfortunately, \$15 doesn't go very far at the airport, and several of the franchise food outlets refused to honour the voucher! Seven hours later we were off to LAX. The airline tried to sort out changes to previously connecting flights, but there was a run-around trying to get it sorted. Eventually I arrived in 1st stop Tucson, Arizona. Lovely and warm when I exited the terminal.

Day 1 was the Pima Air Museum, a wonderful collection of military and civilian aircraft.

My next journey was to Appleton via Chicago, and being late again suggested an overnight in Chicago. But, I was now with my group of Kiwis and Aussies which comprised more than half the scheduled passengers, so they held the flight for us.

In Oshkosh we stayed at the University of Wisconsin where conditions were pretty basic. My bed looks a little like one from a prison cell, and bathrooms were shared. Back to Army days.



The Oshkosh airshow was amazing, with homemades, warbirds and military aircraft. The pic of the MiG-19 is historic as this aircraft crashed at a Michigan airshow a week later. with the crew safely ejecting.



When my time was up it was off to LAX via Chicago. The early start meant a long stopover at LAX. And the homebound aircraft was only 3 hours late leaving, but arrive in Sydney safely. Allen."



find us on

Facebook

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

Minutes for the General Meeting of the 131 Locators Association Inc.

Date: Tuesday, 8th August, 2023 at 1105hrs...

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

Attendees were:

Zoom: Bert Blink, Paul Dickson, Brian Campbell

Zoom: Terry Erbs, Laurie Sawyer Rieny Nieuwenhof

Present: Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam, Gordon Malcolm, Bob Billiards, Ernest Newbold, Ged Carroll, Merv Nairn, Nick Proskurin, Ian Amos. ZOOM: Barry Guzder, Ron Mason (no photo)



Apologies: George Lane, K Browning, Steve Wynn, Ron Mason, Warwick Brooker other State Reps and Jim Fitzgerald

Financial Membership is currently ...**126**, plus Associates **2**, Affiliates **16**. Total **144**. Lapsed **36** members

Presidents report.

Allen referenced.

. LSTAA AGM was held 27 July where President Russ Hamsey mentioned 133 Bty will be re raised.

. Anzac War memorial is presenting a Photo and story display on 12 August "the story of the DAT DO Dogs."

. The Diabetics Assn membership was funded by the DVA. Changes mean that payment will now be required by the client and refunded by DVA.

Public Officer Report.

Gordon had a quiet period with no issues to report.

Webmaster Update.

Bob advised Facebook members are stable and that the Newsletter had been the main feature. We have a couple of members who need to be managed as well as new members trying to add to their profile to accumulate "points".

Health.

. Merv reported that he will be undergoing a OP on his throat with an o/nite stay to check his results and condition.

. Most other members are in manageable health with no serious on-going concerns.

General Business and around the grounds.

Discussions ensued on the following:

. Criticism was received re:the tech equipment used in Zoom Meetings. The microphone used can't be heard in Qld unless elevated. A skyhook is required.

. A minor conversation was held on AFL semi-final prospects.

. **Rieny** advised that Victoria was introducing a state-based Vets discounts scheme similar to the NSW veteran's scheme.

. Canberra reunion event discussed- accommodation confirmed – dinner numbers are more flexible.

. Phone apps for downloading pics are "Photo scanner and "Slideshow." See here <https://expertphotography.com/photo-scanner-apps/>

. **Terry** reported the "BPCGU" "palm leaf" award has been promulgated. The legacy issue is to be cleared up for current serving members of 131 Bty.

. A local QLD reunion is being proposed by **G Williams** for 131 guys at the Gold Coast "Greenmount" on 10/9/2023.

Merv advised his local RSL sub-branch has New version of Last Post including a Didgeridoo.

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, 12th, September, 2023 at 1100hrs

Venue: to be advised

Also, available via Zoom link to be advised



. Birthdays in the Battery...September –

Date	Name	Regt No.	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	ERIC THOMPSON Sgt.	44153	18 02 1968	18 02 1969	
	" "		13 05 1971	04 06 1971	VISIT
2	PHILIP MULGREW	3411756	29 04 1968	07 05 1969	
3	MILLS BUCKLEY	16950	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	† 02.04.07
3	KENNETH HENRY BORGGES	13543	N/A		† 08.11.18
3	PETER SAINT Bdr	45033	04 11 1970	29 07 1971	
6	JOHN DELLACA	3791355	29 01 1968	28 01 1969	
7	STEVEN BOUTLIS	3787962	02 01 1967	27 09 1967	
7	GARY BESTER	3411737	08 01 1968	03 12 1968	
7	IVAN MILLS TREAVATHAN S/Sgt.	213051	31 01 1969	05 11 1969	† 09.01.23
8	WILLIAM EDWARD	2789911	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	
12	BARRY NUGENT	1411039	03 01 1967	12 12 1967	
12	LARRY BRIDGE	2786506	15 03 1968	18 03 1969	
12	PHILIP JOHNS	4719086	16 09 1968	18 03 1969	
12	STEVEN VOSS	1735605	29 04 1970	18 03 1971	
12	KEVIN GEOGHEGAN	219351	16 12 1970	02 06 1971	131
	" "		02 06 1971	23 12 1971	HQ AFV
13	VICTOR CLAXTON	4410991	17 01 1968	23 12 1968	† 07.02.2022
14	MERV DART	37821	03 01 1967	09 01 1968	† 2001
14	FRANK IPSA	3786657	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
14	RUSSELL HEWITT	2792435	03 06 1970	04 03 1971	
16	FRANK PEPPER	216683	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	† 27.12.89

16	RONALD DEAN	215527	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
16	BRIAN BLACK	2786469	27 11 1967	26 11 1968	† 18.01.11
16	ALLEN WHEATLEY	2790305	16 09 1969	04 06 1970	
17	JOHN BLAKE	1731550	04 05 1967	13 12 1967	
17	BARRY GUZDER	5714500	10 06 1967	21 05 1968	
17	MAURICE ARCH	43350	02 01 1967	14 11 1967	† 26.08.17
17	ERNEST GALLOWAY	216708	08 01 1968	22 04 1968	
18	BOB WILSON	3791425	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
18	JAMES FREDERICK LAWLER Sgt.	28523	18 12 1967	03 12 1968	† 14.08.20
19	ROBERT DAVID GOW	61644	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
19	HUBERT ANDREWS	2790121	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	
19	WESLEY HINDMARSH	2791313	30 09 1969	13 08 1970	
19	PHILLIP WAPSHOT	3793468	27 11 1969	18 03 1970	
21	GARRY LEPLAW	217182	05 02 1968	11 02 1969	† 06.12.83
22	IAN BUBB	2792358	13 05 1970	11 03 1971	RAEME
23	GREGORY TOMMASI 2Lt.	3791966	10 03 1970	25 08 1970	131
	" "		25 08 1970	11 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
	GORDON CAMPBELL GUNN	16915	11.03.69	11.03.70	† 23.09.13
24	ROBERT BILLIARDS	2785702	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
24	GEOFFREY CARTHEW	2793339	03 06 1970	09 06 1971	
26	KENNETH McNAMARA	2783740	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	† 24.10.22
26	JOHN DAVIES Sgt.	29351	07 10 1966	30 04 1967	† 2004
26	RONALD BOALER	130230	20 02 1970	11 02 1971	
28	LEONARD WALKER	3798942	16 12 1970	30 06 1971	Det 131 † 29.01.07
	" "		30 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.

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

Ed – 6 blokes not highlighted is disappointing. Maybe one day.

. **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 and he could forward you the relevant forms to join - Memberships are available for 1 year or longer deposit a DONATION direct (add your name) to the associations account at "A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133"

Hope we hear from you?

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

. **Other related sites...**

. **Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...**



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

www.artilleryhistory.org



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

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

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

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

. 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...



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

It is also dedicated to those members of the 1/83rd who did not return. We will never forget their sacrifice. Website: <http://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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

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