

THE EYES and EARS

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

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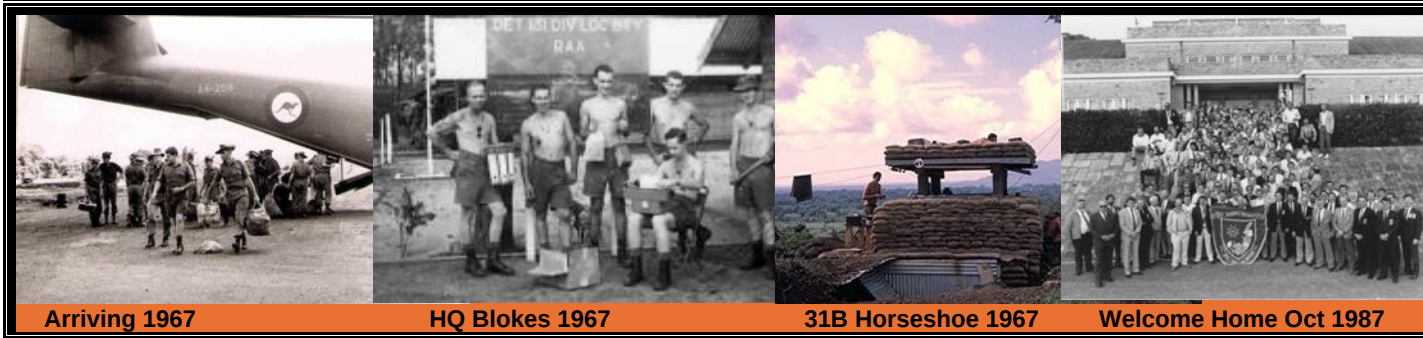
Unit Citation for Gallantry
 awarded to the Detachment
 and those who served at the
 Battles of Coral/Balmoral,
 South Vietnam, 1968

**Detachment 131 Divisional
 Locating Battery RAA
 South Vietnam 1966 – 1971**

**2024
 58 Years and the Detachment
 Spirit Remains
 1966-1971**



Republic of Vietnam Cross of
 Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation
 Awarded to those who served
 with the Detachment
 from 01.04.66 – 19.08.71



. *Eyes and Ears* – the First edition in the new series – 15 Years ago it got re-booted!
 It's just so good to see how it has developed over this time – and a great amount of thanks
 goes out to the lot of you.

Let's see if we can keep it going for a while longer.



Eyes and Ears
 No.0001 February, 2009

A quote from the past...

"31A, 31B, 31C and 31D – Are you awake? Over.... (followed by a long pause) Well I warned you that I would start something, so here goes!

I'm not sure of the format to do this in, but along with possible future submissions from all and sundry on any topic that takes their fancy it may develop into something. I was wondering if anyone would care to be a regular or irregular contributor and take a subject / topic and air their knowledge. Perhaps someone might have a talent in electronics, photography, hypnotism, correcting my spelling and grammar, strange smelly growths occurring under the arm-pits or whatever, and may be able to problem-solve for any questions raised – something like a "Dear Dorothy Dignam" – NO marriage counselling though, not that Grahame may not be good at it! However, I believe he is a qualified Grandchild Tamer!"

Ed – here we go into year 16!

. Australia's Military statistics post 1860 onwards...

The following table is not meant to highlight anything specific other than to show Australia's overall commitment to, not only local conflicts, but the number of personnel that were provided to be involved in world conflicts whether the was a direct threat to our homeland.

What's even more is the population numbers at the time of the major conflicts:-

1914 – 4.9 million

1939 – 6.9 million

1950 – 8.0 million

1966 – 11.6 million

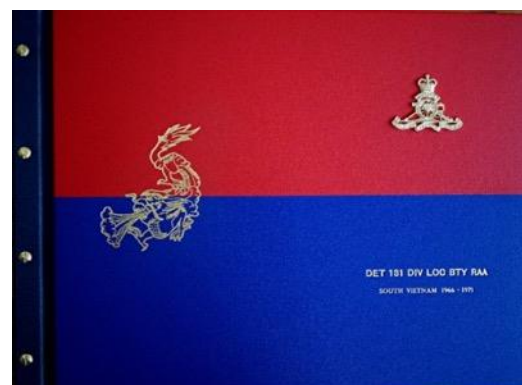
And now as at 1st February, 2024 approximately 26.6 million and this list could go on.

The ratio of members involved in the First World War is staggering.

Conflict	Date	Number enlisted	Killed	Wounded	Prisoners of war
<u>New Zealand</u>	1860–1861	Crew of <i>HMVS Victoria</i> 2,500 in Waikato Regiments	1 <20	Nil Unknown	Nil
<u>Sudan</u>	1885	770 in NSW Contingent	9	3	Nil
<u>South Africa</u>	1899–1902	16,463 in Colonial and Commonwealth contingents	589	538	100
<u>China</u>	1900–1901	560 in NSW, SA and VIC colonial naval contingents	6	Unknown	Nil
<u>First World War</u>	1914–1918	416,809 enlisted in AIF (includes AFC) 324,000 AIF members served overseas 9,000 in RAN Total: 425,809	61,511	155,000	4,044 (397 died in captivity)
<u>Russian Civil War</u>	1918–1919	100–150 in NREF and NRRF 48 in Dunsterforce Crew of <i>HMAS Swan</i>	10	40	Nil
<u>Second World War</u>	1939–1945	727,200 in 2nd AIF and Militia 48,900 in RAN 216,900 in RAAF Total: 993,000	39,761	66,553	8,184 (against Germany and Italy) 22,376 (against Japan) (8,031 died in captivity) Total: 30,560
<u>Post-war mine clearance</u> (Northern Queensland coast and New Guinea)	1947–1950		4		
<u>Japan</u> (British Commonwealth Occupation Force)	1947–1952	16,000	3		
<u>Papua New Guinea</u>	1947–1975		13		
<u>Middle East</u> (UNTSO)	1948–present		1		
<u>Berlin Airlift</u>	1948–1949		1		

<u>Malayan Emergency</u>	1948–1960	7,000 in Army	39	20	Nil
<u>Kashmir</u>	1948–1985		1		
<u>Korean War</u>	1950–1953	10,657 in Army 4,507 in RAN 2,000 in RAAF Total: 17,164	340	1,216	29 (1 died in captivity)
<u>Malta</u>	1952–1955		3		
<u>Korea</u> (Post-armistice)	1953–1957		16		
<u>South-East Asia</u> (SEATO)	1955–1975		6		
<u>Indonesia-Malaysia</u> <u>Confrontation</u>	1962–1966	3,500 in Army	16	9	Nil
<u>Malay Peninsula</u>	1964–1966		2		
<u>Vietnam War</u>	1962–1973	42,700 in Army 2,825 in RAN 4,443 in RAAF Total: 49,968 (60,000+ served)	523	2,398	Nil
<u>Thailand</u>	1965–1968		2		
<u>Irian Jaya</u> (Operation Cenderawasih)	1976–1981		1		
<u>Gulf War</u>	1991	750	Nil	Nil	Nil
<u>Western Sahara</u> (MINURSO)	1991–1994		1		
<u>Somalia</u>	1992–1994	1,480	1		Nil
<u>Bougainville</u>	1997–2003	3,500	1		
<u>East Timor</u>	1999–2013	> 40,000	4		Nil
<u>Afghanistan</u>	2001–2021	> 26,000	41	256	Nil
<u>Iraq</u>	2003–2011	17,000	3	27	Nil
<u>Solomon Islands</u>	2003–2013	7,270	1		
<u>Fiji</u>	2006		2		
Total			~102,932	~ 226,060	~ 34,733

. **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.



. Recollections...

I couldn't resist extracting the following from an **Ernie Newbold** recent email...

"Something I was doing the other day took me back to 3RTB at Singleton in 1966. Prior to serving in the Army breakfast at home was always the usual fare, cereal or porridge followed by toast and fruit juice, it was a nice regular routine and we all knew what to expect Monday to Saturday. However Sunday breakfast at home was different, Sunday meant bacon and eggs for breakfast, that was always something to look forward to.

Then, on the 20th April 1966, I along with a few thousand others were called up with the 4th intake of the last National Service scheme. The following morning, a Thursday, attending the mess we were served bacon and eggs plus extras for breakfast. I thought that this was rather special but then the following morning, a Friday we were served bacon and eggs again, wow how about that!

After the first week or so of having bacon and eggs every day it no longer seemed so special.

After two years of Army breakfasts, except for when we were out in the field using ration packs, I reverted to the pre-Army breakfast menu and am back to enjoying bacon and eggs for breakfast just once per week, if that.

Funny how things like that pop up in the mind unexpectedly from time to time.

Regards, Ernie."

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



Give me a Name?

The "Lost Locator Project"

This Project is being re-ignited for 2024.

Our current list contains the names of **95** Locators (as at 29.02.2024) that we have not had contact with since, basically, commencing communications in 2012, so, we are going to focus a little more on this programme to try and reduce this number.

Let's have a look at MARCH'S Birthday List, below, where there are 9 Detachment and Battery Members listed as Lost Locators – see the names below.

So, we've done some great discoveries with Members Dates Of Death, I'm hoping we might muster some enthusiasm for this difficult task. I've added some more details as to full DoB's and places of birth according to the DVA Nominal Roll for, maybe, some help.

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 be a good starter.

I will keep an update and publish monthly results in *Eyes & Ears*.

Paul Dickson

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

Date	Name	Regt No	DoB	SVN In	SVN Out	DVA Location
3	Grahame Alfred LEE	2787457	1947	23 04 1968	23 04 1969	Sydney NSW
3	Roger Anthony Stanley	2788155	1947	08 11 1968	27 08 1969	Arncliffe NSW
20	Ronald John Robards	216900	1948	21 02 1968	21 02 1969	Brisbane
21	Michael Gordon King	216504	1948	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	Sydney
22	Gregory Kenneth Peck	2790401	1948	04 11 1969	04 06 1970	Inverell
25	Robert Wallace Hargreaves	2790343	1948	04 11 1969	04 06 1970	Tumut
27	Kenneth Eric Winn	219656	1951	30 05 1970	07 08 1970	Marrickville 131
	" "			07 08 1970	05 05 1971	4 Fd Regt.
30	Frank Halliday Sgt.	215105	1937	02 01 1967	13 12 1967	Ballarat
31	Graham Leslie Hislop Sgt.	15290	1935	22 04 1966	03 03 1967	Casino

...a continuing investigation –

. Unknown Dates of Deaths continues to be updated...as at 29.2024 -

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										Total
1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	
1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	7
1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	
0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	7
1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
0	0	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	10
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
3	2	2	2	0	3	2	1	2	1	18
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
0	4	4	4	2	9	5	6	5	4	43
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
8	4	4	5	6	7	10	10	2	0	56
Unknowns*										2
Total										143

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 31.01.2024.

*Unknowns – Sadly, we have only been advised of the Members' passings only.

This following sections have now been updated as of 31.01.2024 and show a clear picture of Battery/Detachment Members that have incomplete Date of Death details.

Here are the names and details – **ONLY ONE TO GO!**

Name	Rank	Regt No	Section	SVN	DoB	DoD
Robinson, Marcus Lee	Gnr	2791229		1970	14.02.48	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.

However, as a continuation, this has been extended to cover more Unknown details... such as Rank, Regt No (not an easy discovery), Section, DoB and then day.month for DoD's.

Ok, detectives, here's more homework – **ONLY 1 gap to go!**

Name	Rank	Regt No	Section	SVN	DoB	DoD
O'Keefe, Michael Francis	Pvt	2787168	AACC	1968-69	26.11.46	00.00.80

Ed – Michael O'Keefe, sadly, remains as the last Locator to have his details updated. Our thanks go to those that have given more meaning to those "mates" who are no longer physically with us.

. Quiz Time.



Here's are a couple of intersecting ones...

- . Do you know when the legal age to vote in Australian Federal elections was lowered to 18 years of age?
- . Would you have voted for the Holt Coalition Government in 1966 and afterwards if you were eligible?

Mail Call...

Ron Mason – A Memory of Helmut Lempa... “Hi Paul, yes I do remember Helmut in Vietnam - with B radar for a while & yes he was not well when sent home. Have you sleuths found where he was when he passed away? Yes I have been a bit slack in replying to your last email, it's that time of year again when I seem to have to chase Vietnam Veterans for membership of the local Goulburn Valley V V Assoc & also the members of a small RSL not to forget trying to keep Consumer Affairs Vic happy with both groups. I continue to have some very flat days with this Myositis affecting strength & ability to swallow food - but I still get a bit done around the farm on most days 🙌 .. Sure sounds like you had a well-timed trip to the Middle East. All for the minute Ron M.”

Philip Mulgrew – “I'm now on the mend after open heart surgery to fix leaky heart valves some months back. Both the tricuspid and the mitral heart valves had collapsed and needed some repair work. It's all good now hopefully. Take care.”



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 Richmond – “Hi Paul.

Just a quick catch up.

Has been a real crazy summer down here. Canberra, up till now, has only had a few real hot days, however the rain so far this month was most welcome.

Glad we are not up north.

As usual haven't been very far from home over the past month or so. Hope to go down the south coast in the next month or so. for beaches and surf I think they are just great, in fact, I see them as far better than the Gold Coast or etc up North. Only a couple of hours from home

Any way I hope you and yours have survived the Christmas and New Year seasons. Regards. JR.”

Ken Osborne – “Good to hear from you again, hope the eyes have settled down or at least improving. Weather here has been out of character for us up to 40 degrees and next day 25 with little rain, north Qld has had 2 cyclones and another threatening with more than enough rain. Got a clean bill of health from one of my specialists yesterday so hoping that continues, still not healthy but at least all the signs and tests are positive. Australia Day celebrations had the same old rat-bag complaints, half of them don't understand what they are celebrating on 26 Jan (there's some homework for you) Stay well, regards, Ken.”

Warwick Brooker – “G'day Dicko - That cold weather of yours sounds great right now, but I suppose when winter arrives here again I'll be complaining about the cold just as I'm complaining about the heat right now. Nothing much doing here apart from doubling the grandchildren tally - from one to two. Hope your operation provides the required result and still leaves you looking like Dicko! My nose was reshaped a little a few years ago by a skin cancer op. Best wishes to you and Helen, Warwick.”

Nick Armstrong – “Hello Paul, Thank you for your email letter.

Here on the southern end of Eyre Peninsula, the weather has been quite benign. We have had some heavy rain events, although the crop farmers are probably the only ones affected. Some had not finished harvest, but apparently, they are getting good prices for feed grade grain!

The only other weather-related matter is almost constant strong SE winds for the past four months. Meteorologists are attributing the cause to a thinning of the ozone layer! The constant strong winds make boating uncomfortable. The wind, bus driving duties and DVA sponsored Gym have all limited my fishing time.

There have been bushfires in other parts of Australia, and quite a few in the SE of South Australia, but so far, the high risk has not eventuated here. We still have about three months of 'Fire Danger Season', so not a time for complacency.

Christmas/New Year was busier than usual, with family from WA and Tasmania visiting. We only manage to assemble them all at once, every couple of years. It has taken most of January to de-stock the 'fridge and freezer of all the donations and 'special dietary' needs.

I have never been a person who celebrates 'Special' dates. The past is the foundation for the future, and today is the beginning of that future. That said, this Christmas was significant. Robin and I had been married for fifty years last April, and I will be Eighty in May. At first thought it does not seem so long, but on reflection, a lot has changed. Our children are rapidly approaching their fiftieth birthdays, and the old body that looks at me in the mirror is different from the one waiting for the RTA Qantas plane in Saigon in 1968!

Robin and I still enjoy good health, so much to be thankful there. The DVA Gym sessions are probably helping, although I don't see me nominating for the Olympics anytime soon! Two of my half-hour sessions are one on one with the physio, but the third session is one hour in a group session. The group session is useful as a social gathering, and an opportunity to compare ourselves with veterans of a similar age. For anyone with the opportunity, the DVA sessions are worth doing. I think that is about all for now so cheers from Nick and Robin,”

Peter Fletcher – “Hi Paul, Thanks for your update.

Not much to report here.

We are both well. Playing golf three times a week and walking other days.

As you say the weather has been a topic of discussion by all. Flooding and awful humidity.

Looking forward to a cool change, as we are over it.

Cheers for now, Fletch.”

David Auld – “G'Day Paul health-wise still hanging in there, still heading to Armidale to babysit, also helping my son raise a couple of pigs, some pork coming up in a couple of months.

Looking forward to next year with the 100th Anniversary of locating, which has gone a long way since 1925 anyway take care.”

Kevin Browning – “Hi Paul, Hope the operation to control your tears has worked.

The problem probably caused by all you do for us. All is pretty good down here apart from the harassments I get from Mexico (really a pleasure to assist).

Apart from the usual skin cancer removals I'm fine. Had a nasty one taken off the leg before Christmas but it is healing well.

The weather people predicted a long hot and dry summer but mainly the humidity in Sydney has been higher than normal. Always was an issue after we had the wet periods. The Weather Bureau here is copping it because of their bad predictions. Hard to have confidence in their forecasting as it has been far from accurate. People say they are more interested in Global warming issues than the actual events of the day.

I'm still umpiring Cricket and that keeps me busy on the weekends. Had one hot day. Laws say we come off if the temperature reaches 42 and if not below 38 within the hour the game is abandoned. That day we started at 1.30 and the temp was 41.1. Thought we would be off after a couple of overs. At 3 o'clock it got up to 41.8 and at 6 was still over 40. Next day it was in the high 20s.

Apart from that I continue with the Artillery Register recording the historic artillery in Australia. Over 2000 recorded now. Take care, Kevin.”

Keith Ayliffe – “G'Day Paul

You're right mate the years keep rolling on. You're obviously getting old people discussion points. I've had it for years body breaking down all sorts of ailments we never thought about in the younger days. Things to slow you down mentally, then physically Then they seem to gang up on you.

As the old add went "Anyhow" we must be above the grass or we would not be able to moan about our problems.

In six months' time I will be stepping down from my role on the LSTAA committee after over 21 years. Age is certainly catching up.

My final act was putting together all the Data on Locating for the "Centenary of Locating" which has been approved and accepted by the Artillery Historic Society and who have now taken it to the Army so it can be placed on the Defence Force Calendar - **the Date 1 July 2025**. I imagine there will be a big reunion organised in Brisbane around this date, I have suggested to our Assoc that it should work with you, AAHS and the Australian Artillery Association and the two Army units that are using our techniques in the Current Army system. 20 Regt RAA Brisbane and 9 Regt RAA (Army Reserve)

I am told that the actual Re-raising of 133 Bty Under Command of 20 Regt RAA may actually be held up till then as well even though the BC and RSM have been named and I believe actually serving now. This could be one excellent re-union for all locating past and present and in my opinion cement locating in the future of the Army.

All the best Paul. Keith."

Vic Danko – "Hi Paul , Sorry for delay. Seems like I have more work than ever before.

Anyway, first things first, trust your eyelid surgery is producing the results you expected.

You can cry and stop doing so on a moment's notice!!

Couple of months ago I had a skin check and they decided to cut out a suspicious looking item in my chest. When the surgeon showed me what was cut out for biopsy purposes, it was the size and looked like a Georges River oyster!!! And it came up malignant. But just early days and after a little more surgery I'm fine!!

But played golf at Manly today, all well .

I'm going to Saigon etc in two weeks' time. Three weeks of golf and reminiscing.

Perhaps my last visit. Will try to climb Nui Dat hill (maybe) it's now a gravel quarry and no identifiable paths to the top.

Would like to stand at 31A again.

June I'm in Thailand doing the same thing. I'm going to try and spend more money!!!

Well what happens next. Thanks."

Steve Wynn – "G'day mate, Sorry again for my slack reply, I have been concentrating on a cancerous lump that developed a few months ago, it has sapped all my energy. On top of that my old iPhone was too old to download any updated OSs so replaced that and had to learn how to use a new android phone. Haven't had android for 10 years so quite a learning curve. Ended up with 5G phone with Telstra.

Then my data was hacked through Optus when they got hacked, on top of that Optus network keeps going down (NBN) so I had to look for another internet provider, went to Telstra with a good deal on super-fast 5G wifi internet, like 350-850mbps depending where I locate the modem.

Then got my data hacked from The Good Guys (TGG) when they were hacked, the NSW SES had a deal with TGG for very big discounts, so I had to buy lots of stuff I didn't need. Very worrying to think there could be multiples of me running around, and worse still chalking up purchases to my cost. I was always of the opinion that one of me was sufficient for the world to cope with.

I will send you something soon, how many times have I said that now.

You two stay safe over there in Mexico, Steve."

Mike Butler – "Hi Paul, apologies for late reply.

Had a good Xmas with all 3 of our children and their families able to get together. Our oldest son and his partner just had our 8th grandchild !!

Not a lot going on except we are about to start our usual monthly lunches with our group of Viet Vets at the local RSL.

I am travelling OK - keeping busy in the garden trying to keep plants alive after recent hot weather. Also, planning to take our caravan to Warrnambool in early April to see our son who lives there.

Hopefully will have more news next time. Cheers, Mike."

Steve Boutlis – "Hi, Dicko.

Thanks for staying in touch with us all. I hope that you are still snow free. It sounds as though you are not very fond snow!

I, on the other hand, would love to move to Arrowtown on the South Island of NZ, close to Queenstown, where the snow lies thick. That move, of course, would mean a divorce!

Sorry about the late replies, especially not giving you a heads up on the 50th anniversary of the ending of our little adventure in South East Asia.

The ceremony was very moving and my son got to know a little bit more of us and me.

The dinner was very enjoyable and full marks to Dig for his excellent organisation of it. I was sad not to have seen more of our boys there.

I nearly fell over backwards to see, after 56 years, our survey instructor at North Head, Geoff Jebb.. He looked so fit and healthy at age 90+. He did spend some months at the Canberra hospital after a fall off the ladder he was using to clean the roof gutters at his place. At age 90!!!! He said that what did him was retrieving that last bit of litter just beyond his fingertips.

My son Craig and his wife Phillipa were at the dinner and were thoroughly pleased to meet and chat with my 131 mates.

Photos of me with Geoff and Dave, and me and Victor Denko.



I approached Dave on the possibility of a 131 only reunion at Coffs for 2024 but have not as yet heard any more about it. Health-wise all good so far. But my wife's big toe after nearly three years of fungal infection, has not been cured.

I remember Ray Hutchinson, as I shared the tent behind the Q Store with him when he took over as Quartermaster from "Robbie" Robertson. I was his assistant until I was transferred to the radar on the west side of the highway (Bravo?). I owned a 1966 HR Holden. Bought it second hand in about 1973, after the Skoda was getting a bit exxy to keep repairing. The HR was a oil guzzler! On a trip to Bright, I had to keep the oil filler cap off. But the Skoda! It was an Octavia model (northing like the current one) which had a floor shift that whacked you hard on the left kneecap whenever you went over a bump at speed. On the trip from Puccka to Holdsworth at the end of recruit training, on the old Hume Highway (one lane each way, no edge marking) with Pete Hopper, at night, the headlights died! We all know that Pedro is rather tall, with long legs. Yep! He stretched and pushed the pull on push off light switch! Luckily, I didn't drop us off the unmarked edge! I had lots of memorable trips in that Skoda between Sydney and Melbourne!

But it did have a useless 50 month warranty and seatbelts as standard! Keep up the great work with E&E Paul. Cheers, Boots."

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

The new *Eyes and Ears* Banner has photos attached below it? That's new!

It's our intention to rotate "memorabilia" type photos from any era, so if you want to be involved send some in to me at -

131eyesandears@gmail.com

Paul Dickson



The following is an extract from the **131 Locators Association's Facebook** page

James Reid, son of the late **Jeff Reid**, who served with the Detachment as a Bombardier in South Vietnam in 1967-68 in Arty Tac and 31A, plus did some time in the Q Store has a request...

"Hello All,

My late father Jeff Reid. Did anyone know or fought with him. I would love to hear some stories of a man I truly admired."

All you have to do is get onto the 131 Association webpage at 131locators.org.au and click on Facebook and make contact.

RSL NSW Events - Sydney

The Order of March and Map can be found on the RSL NSW website using the following links:
Events@rslnsw.org.au



Formation - Bent Street at Chifley Square with the Map Reference 20 RAA Group

Look for the 131 Locators Association Banner.
You'll need to be in place by at least 10.05am.

ANZAC Day – 2024

Lets' get organised for this year!

How about submitting your plans for groups large or small and how about letting us know what's happening in your neck of the woods – you never know there may be someone who may want to say g'day.

I'm expecting to get some details on the major hubs for meeting times and places to congregate.

I'll need the info for March's *Eyes and Ears* (by 28th March) thanks.

Paul Dickson 131eyesandears@gmail.com

"Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program- Comprehensive Plan"

Bert Blink mentioned the following topic of "a regular medical check-up" during the "Health" Segment at the 131 Locators Association meeting via ZOOM on 13th February 2024, then due to questions, **Rieny Nieuwenhof** forwarded the following information in relation to the topic –

"It aims to bring together all the agents looking after the veteran's health - doctors, Allied Health providers (skin specialist, dietician, physiotherapist, psychologist, exercise physiologist, etc.) The aim is for them to pass on what they are doing and results to your GP doctor. It is coordinated by a qualified nurse.
I think application forms are obtainable from your doctor/medical clinic or DVA Website."

...it has been extracted via the DVA website -

The CVC Program provides proactive care coordination for **Veteran Gold Card** holders with chronic health conditions and **Veteran White Card** holders with chronic DVA-accepted mental health conditions. Providers and participants work as a team to improve the participant's health care in a general practice setting.

...just to add additional information re: a broad explanation of "The Veterans Gold Card" and "The Veterans White Card" also extracted from the DVA website -

"What is the Veteran Gold Card?" The Veteran Gold Card gives you access to a wide range of public and private health care services, for the treatment of all your medical conditions. This treatment is provided at the expense of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

What is the Veteran White Card? The White Card is a treatment card that can provide you with medical treatment for: accepted service-related injuries or conditions. all mental health conditions (for veterans with continuous full-time service or certain reserve service)

If you have questions about the CVC Program, you can call: [1800 550 457](tel:1800550457)

p.s.

Are you aware of the following –

A funeral benefit is a one-off payment, up to a maximum of \$2,000, to help with the funeral costs of an eligible veteran or dependent. The costs covered by a funeral benefit may include: wakes, memorial ceremonies or similar observances.

A Request...

"Hi,
My name is **Fred Flower** and I would like to find a long lost friend of mine, we worked together, prior to that we spent a lot of time together, we joined the army together back on the 6th Nov 1966, my regimental number was 44152, my mate is 44153 **Eric Thompson**, I noticed his name on your birthday list, I am hoping you may be able to give me some contact details so that I may be able to contact him.

Kind Regards

Fred Flower

0419 024 722"

Eric Thompson (Temp Sgt) – is one of our Unknowns. He served with Detachment from 19.02.68 to 18.02.69.

If anyone can help Fred you can contact him or **Paul Dickson** 131eyesandears@gmail.com

MINISTER KEOGH - MEDIA RELEASE - CONSULTATION NOW OPEN ON VETERANS' LEGISLATION REFORM

Department of Veterans' Affairs

OFFICIAL



**THE HON MATT KEOGH MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL**

MEDIA RELEASE

28 FEBRUARY 2024

CONSULTATION NOW OPEN ON VETERANS' LEGISLATION REFORM

The Albanese Government has today released exposure draft legislation which will simplify and harmonise the century old veterans' entitlements, compensation and rehabilitation system.

The current system is difficult to understand and complex to administer. The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide found the system was "so complicated that it adversely affects the mental health of some veterans and can be a contributing factor to suicidality."

Following consultation, the draft legislation will simplify the veteran compensation system, with all claims to be considered under a single Act. Under the new system:

- All new claims for compensation and rehabilitation from the date of commencement would be assessed under a single Act, an improved *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA)*;

- The *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* would be closed to new claims following commencement of the new arrangements;
- All benefits being received under existing schemes will continue unaffected under grand-parenting arrangements. Any new claims after the commencement date (including claims for worsening of pre-existing conditions) will be assessed under the improved MRCA.

There will also be a number of improvements including:

- introduction of a new Additional Disablement Amount to provide similar benefits as the Extreme Disablement Adjustment for those post retirement age;
- making the higher travel allowance under MRCA available to all veterans and for all kilometres travelled;
- providing a pathway for veterans currently only covered by DRCA to qualify for the Specialist Medical Review Council and a Gold Card if they have a new claim accepted and
- increasing the general funeral allowance to \$3,000 with the amount previously set at \$2,000.

Today's release of draft legislation follows the Government's earlier consultation on a pathway to simplify the veterans' legislative framework, and provide better support to veterans and their families. Feedback from that consultation has guided the proposed changes announced today.

I welcome feedback and submissions from the veteran community and general public on the draft Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024, submissions close on 28 April 2024.

More information on the proposed legislation changes, and opportunities to provide feedback can be found here – www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform.

MEDIA CONTACT: media.team@dva.gov.au

Editor's note: The Government understands that the changes underway are significant and may lead to feelings of anxiety or distress for veterans and families. If this is the case, you are encouraged to contact the Open Arms Veterans and Families Counselling service. Open Arms is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 or visit OpenArms.gov.au.



Committee Members:

President: *Allen Morley*

Vice President: *Bert Blink*

Treasurer/Secretary: *Grahame Dignam*

Public Officer: *Gordon Malcolm*

Webmaster: *Bob Billiards*

Research Officer: *Ernie Newbold*

Design Development Officer: *Nick Proskurin*

Eyes and Ears Editor: *Paul Dickson*

General Members: *Ian Amos, Ged Carroll, George Lane, Merv Nairn*



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...

One of the most interesting, and now perpetual aspects of the covid pandemic has been the major move to Work From Home (WFH) for many employees. Obviously not all workers could WFH however a significant number would. This covid response required individuals to set up an 'office', often this being their kitchen table and have computer access to their home HQ base. That became a challenging time for the IT service experts, usually located at head office. To not have the IT advice directly at hand seemingly meant inefficiencies and delays in workers staying on stream or being able to access the head office.

For those whose businesses which did not have the luxury of an IT specialist at phone contact WFH access became a problem. However, those who set up their own businesses operating from a non-HQ base had to become their own IT source.

In my own case, I moved initially from phone-line connection for emails and further down the track to modem/router. I taught myself MS Word and PowerPoint, plus went to a training course for Excel. In doing so I became my own IT operator.

Recently for some reason my text screen went from white background and black text to the reverse. I tried many possible solutions including seeking advice from Dr IT Google. But I could not get it to change. My daughter who lives in New Zealand was visiting Sydney for work. So, I explained my problem and Allison contacted her work IT centre. Soon after I had black text against a white background so was back where I wanted to be.

Regards

Allen



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

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

MEETING: Date: Tuesday, 13th February, 2024 at 1105hrs...

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

Attendees were: Present were - Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam, Gordon Malcolm, Ged Carroll, Merv Nairn, Nick Proskurin, Bob Billiards, Ernest Newbold and Ian Amos.

Zoomed members were: Paul Dickson, Terry Erbs, Bert Blink, Brian Campbell, Rieny Nieuwenhof.



Apologies were received from Steve Wynn, Vic Danko, Kev Browning, Warwick Brooker, George Lane, Jim Fitzgerald, and other State Reps

Financial Membership Financial Membership is currently **128**, plus Associates **2**, plus Affiliates **14** Total **144**
Plus Lapsed as at 1/2/2024 **33** members

Presidents report.

Allen referenced -

- . LSTAA Sydney Xmas gathering at the Panania Diggers RSL on 17th December was attended by our Rep Ernest Newbold with apologies from Allen Morley and Grahame Dignam.
- . A retention amount is being offered to attract and retain soldiers. Retrospective claims are not allowed.
- . DVA has produced a very comprehensive end of life kit entitled "Planning ahead."

Public Officer Report.

Gordon has dealt with the AGM report to Fair Trading as well as a change to the Associations address to The Secretary/Treasurer 8 Barlett Street Oran Park NSW 2570. The change has now been accepted by the Dept of Fair Trading.

Webmaster Update.

Robert advised Facebook members to be 409. We are attracting some who want to market non sponsored merchandise to our members- these are barred. More posters are more active lately which is a good sign.

Health Report:

- . Rieny advised that the DVA had a link named "Planning Ahead". He also mentioned a checklist had been developed for "end of life" situations. He will forward details.
- . A document "Veterans Care" is available from the DVA website. This deals with coordinated care from different practitioners into a whole wellbeing scenario for the veteran. When you attend the GP or Eye Doctor, they will be aware of the different aspects of care being prescribed by each.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

- . **Gordon Malcolm** expanded on the preparations of the **Riverboat Postman outing** and lunch. The boat departs at 10.00AM. The meeting will be after the cruise at 2.00PM and zoomed. Booking numbers need to be confirmed to Gordon at gormal@bigpond.net.au by 6th March 2024. A summary is attached to this email for information and will be sent to confirmed attendees on the 6th march.
 - . **Terry Erbs** confirmed the Brisbane Anzac Day March committee is meeting to organize the placement of A BTY in the parade.
 - . The Photo Album will have a pre-release with photos and descriptions appearing on the website. We will advise via Face book and website when the first edition is available. This is to encourage submissions from our fellow Vets who have mega collections of photos that need to be included in the finished product. The appeal for contributions will be followed by personal contact but don't wait to be asked – get in on the ground level!!!!
- Contact sectreas131locators@gmail.com and arrange to send your pics with the description attached – there is no maximum !!!!!

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

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting

Date: 12th March 2024 at 2.00 PM at Hawkesbury River Brooklyn

Following a 10.00 AM Riverboat Postman Cruise and lunch event Then at Anglers Rest Hotel.

And available via Zoom link to be advised.



. Birthdays in the Battery...March –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	Ezio Bernard Lombardo	216284	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
2	Geoffrey Holden	2785828	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
2	James Harold Townley Brig.	17072	14 06 1963	22 06 1963	103 Fd Bty
	" "		22 04 1966	19 08 1966	131
	" "		30 04 1970	28 05 1970	HQ AFV † 10.02.1970
2	Peter John Bennett	3794060	26 08 1969	04 06 1970	
3	Eric Henry Marques LBdr	3790008	10 06 1967	21 05 1968	
3	Raymond John Smith	3787666	20 05 1966	02 05 1967	† 15.01.2023
3	Grahame Alfred Lee	2787457	23 04 1968	23 04 1969	
3	Roger Anthony Stanley	2788155	08 11 1968	27 08 1969	
3	Ralph Bruce Mitchell	2788073	08 11 1968	27 08 1969	

4	Joseph James Clendinen	17648	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
6	Garry Warren Luscombe Temp/Sgt	243144	22.04.66	09 05 1967	RAEME
8	Russell Andrew Jackson Temp/Bdr	3793090	24 02 1969	28 11 1969	† 05.02.2024
8	Barry Cooke Sgt.	54886	16 09 1968	24 09 1969	† 13.03.1999 RAAOC
9	Lawrence John Gallop	5713642	04 05 1966	11 12 1966	
8	Desmond McGuiggan Sgt.	214722	20 01 1970	21 01 1971	† 24.02.2021
11	Robert Scott Tanner	6708362	21 05 1966	28 04 1967	
11	Peter John McKie	2787728	22 04 1968	23 04 1969	
12	James Joseph Fitzgerald	2782044	04 05 1966	29 04 1967	
13	John (Jack) Verenon Heyes	3791085	05 12 1967	03 12 1968	† 09.09.2021
13	Allan James Campbell Sgt.	18257	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	† 19.06.2009
	" "		05 02 1968	31 03 1968	
13	William Ross Bullen Temp/Cpl	243083	20 05 1966	18 11 1966	RAEME † 13.08.1983
14	Neville Charles Wortlethock LBdr	54941	29 04 1968	30 04 1969	
17	Geoffrey William Lock	2782439	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	† 09.09.2010
18	Victor Alan Moreau	1200577	22 04 1966	23 01 1967	† 09.02.2019
18	Roy Grayden Clausen	214873	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	
20	Brian Douglas Campbell	2781310	22 04 1966	30 04 1967	
20	Barry Griffin Follington	2783144	12 12 1966	27 09 1967	
20	Iain Michael Kennedy	3791023	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
20	Ronald John Robards	216900	21 02 1968	21 02 1969	
21	Garry Kenneth Smith	2792048	15 04 1970	17 12 1970	† 19.01.2012
21	Michael Gordon King	216504	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	
21	Warren John Jaenke	1735584	20 02 1970	11 02 1971	
22	Gregory Kenneth Peck	2790401	04 11 1969	04 06 1970	
23	Derek John Hinde	2787403	01 07 1968	14 05 1969	
23	Martin Kryntjes	5715291	26 08 1968	04 06 1969	† 27.12.2017
25	Garth Peter John Nichols	216381	{05 02 1968	11 02 1969	
	" "		{05 11 1969	28 11 1969	1 Fd REGT
25	Robert Wallace Hargreaves	2790343	04 11 1969	04 06 1970	
26	George Edward Lane	2781630	04 05 1966	11 12 1966	
27	Kenneth Eric Winn	219656	30 05 1970	07 08 1970	131
	" "		07 08 1970	05 05 1971	4 Fd Regt.
29	Jeffrey Leonard Reid	3790495	26 09 1967	17 09 1968	† 21.10.2022
30	Frank Halliday Sgt.	215105	02 01 1967	13 12 1967	
30	Edward George Chase	2782043	04 05 1966	11 12 1966	
31	Leslie James Cahill	2412281	20 05 1966	30 04 1967	† 30.07.1974
31	Graham Leslie Hislop Sgt.	15290	22 04 1966	03 03 1967	
31	Philip Allen Sheedy	4719418	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	

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

Ed – 9 blokes not highlighted is not a great result and requires work being done! 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 (back in October 2022)** . **Ed** – There is a definite need to action section of our history.

Locator Profiles Project

This Project was instigated quite a few years back with the intention of re-connecting Battery and Detachment Members who may have lost contact with mates, plus help others to get to become acquainted with other Locators. Plus to add to the Detachment/Battery history.

From the "Locator Profile" article above you'll note we have archived 175 Locator Profiles, which out of 476 Members who served in South Vietnam represents less than 5% contributions, then, if we take into account the numbers that served in the Locating Battery Units it is a minute number.

Number 175 was archived in October 2022.

Another pertinent point is the section that follows this article – **Vale**. Let alone having your history archived it also would allow a much deeper connection to your history and memories for mates at that time along with photos and details.

Please give some thought to completing one if you haven't. This is a sincere request.

Contact me for a blank copy at 131eyesandears@gmail.com

Paul Dickson

. Located...

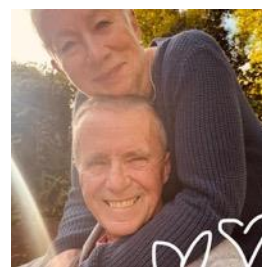
Have a look at the Association's web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au> – you might find some lost mates or get in touch with us and see if we can for you.

Vale

Ted Jux advised us of **Alasdair Gough's** passing, which occurred on the 3rd December, 2023 after a short illness.

Alasdair, born in Edinburgh, Scotland, was a National Serviceman, Regt No 2105130 who served with the Detachment 131 Locating Battery RAA as a Lance Bombardier in both 31 Alpha and 31 Bravo LPs during his time in Vietnam which ranged from 25 03 1970 to 04 03 1971.

This is a personal photo of Alasdair
extracted from his email address.



Name: Gough, Alisdair

Service No: 2105130 Rank: Lance Bombardier

SVN In: 25 03 1970 SVN Out: 04 03 1971

DoB: 13 07 1947 DoD: 03 12 2023

Lest We Forget



David Auld – “RIP Lance Bombardier.”

Bill Taggart (1st/83rd US Artillery) – “On behalf of the 1/83rd, please pass along our condolences to Alasdair's family. Lest We Forget. Bill.”

Vale

Barbara McAlpine has just notified me of her husband's, **Stewart McAlpine**, passing on 21st November, 2023.

Stewart, from St Leonards, NSW was a National Serviceman, with a rank of Gunner, Regt No 2787471 who served with the Detachment 131 Locating Battery RAA in Vietnam which ranged from 09 07 1968 to 04 06 1968.



Name: McAlpine, Stewart Wayne

Service No: 2787471 Rank: Gunner

SVN In: 09 07 1968 SVN Out: 04 06 1969

DoB: 25 12 1946 DoD: 21 11 2023

Lest We Forget



Wade Cooper – “Lest We Forget.”

Bill Taggart (1st/83rd US Artillery)– “On behalf of the 1st/83rd, please pass along our condolences to Stewart’s family. Lest We Forget Bill.”

Philip Mulgrew – “Hi Paul

I had a long association with 'Macca' back to the Battery at Holsworthy in 1968. 'Macca' had a great sense of humour and a ready wit, which made him quite popular. I have some photos of him which I would like to share with you and all the members. Godspeed to him. Phil.”

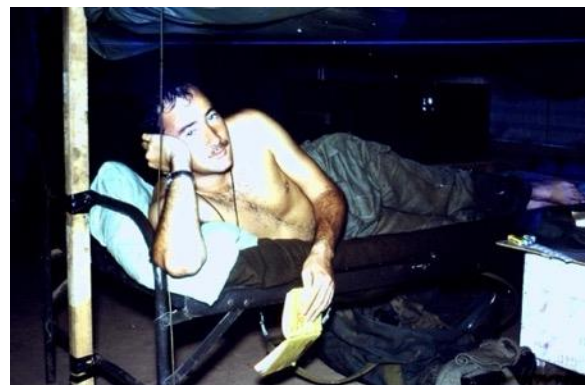


Macca and Bluey Healey take a break during the construction of 31 Delta Mk 2 at the 2/35th Artillery Battalion gun park. July-Aug 1968

In the Detachment lines. Macca nearest camera on the left. Grahame Lee, Detachment Clerk standing? Peter McKie standing. Bob Wilson sitting. Nev Wortlethock standing far right. Can't remember when that one was taken, or if I even took the photograph.



Macca in the field with the radio when we were 3-4 km outside the Dat to the east supporting A Battery 2/35th Artillery Battalion conducting an interdiction mission. Aug- September 1968



At the Horseshoe 31 Bravo. Around Christmas 1968



On the way to the sandbag point outside the Dat. Macca, nearest to the camera. Peter McKie, Peter Dealy and myself. Don't know who took this one either but it was my camera, possibly July-Aug 1968

Derek Hinde – “G'day Paul...both Stewart NS (278 7471) and I served in 131 DLB in Arty Tac and LPs in 68-69. He was a great Mate and a Nasho, as was I. My regimental no. is close to his, both 9th intake NS. (my no. 2787403.) Both conscripted in 1967. From Sydney. NSW. We went to Holsworthy after Basic training. Went to North Head to School of Artillery and we did the Locating Course together. We both were sent to Vietnam in 1968 to be at Nui Dat. 1ATF.

I have lots of photos of Stewart and myself. John Delacca would have many as well, as would Phil Mulgrew and Peter McKie. All in Country 68-69 Nui Dat.
Sorry to hear of his Passing. Best Wishes to Barbara and his family. RIP. Stewy.
Kind Regards. Derek Hinde. 2787403."

Paul Dickson - An extract from *Eyes and Ears*

(March 2018 Vol 11 No 103 No 116)

"...then another "what the...!" moment -

I just happened to send out some "Catching up to say g'day..." emails, when almost instantly, I got an email from **Stewart McAlpine** – Arty Tac, '68-'69 (photo at right) and bugger me he lives in the small town of Kettering, Tasmania just where we were staying overnight to go over to Bruny Island the next day. He related the story of finding out about *Eyes & Ears* when he ran into **Bruce Irvine** at a funeral in Wangaratta. Small world stuff. It was great to meet him and as a bonus his wife **Barbara** where we had a coffee overlooking a very pleasant marina."



Vale

Kevin Browning advised me of **Russell Jackson's** passing on 4th February, 2024 after a term of serious illness.

Graeme Owen – forwarded information with regards to the Memorial Service which was held on Friday 16th February.

Graeme added – "He had been in Palliative Care for the past fortnight, following a long battle with his deteriorating lungs."



	Name: Jackson, Russell Andrew "Jacko" Service No: 3793090 Rank: Temp. Bombardier SVN In: 25 02 1969 SVN Out: 28 11 1969 DoB: 08 03 1945 DoD: 04 02 2024 Lest We Forget	
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Rieny Nieuwenhof placed the wreath on behalf of the **131 Locators Association**.

...attendees were Left to right: Jeff Schafer. (69-70), John Henshaw (69-70), Peter Creedon (69-70), Graeme Owen (68-69), Brett Rainsford (68-69), Peter Larkin (68-69), Kevin Browning (68-69 & 1971) and Rieny Nieuwenhof (1971).

Kevin Browning added: The ceremony went well and was great to see so many of those that served with Russ attend.

Rieny had the flowers from the Association which was great to see.

It was also certainly well attended by others. Because of other commitments I had to travel up and back in the day but the others had the chance to go to dinner in the evening. Brett travelled across from WA. Brian Smyth was coming down from Qld, he was in the same room with Russ at the Dat, but was hit with Covid.

Wade Cooper – “Lest We Forget.”

Bill Taggart (1st/83rd US Artillery) – “On behalf of the 1/83rd, please pass along our condolences to Russell’s family. Lest We Forget. Bill.”

Philip Mulgrew – “Hi Paul

I had only met Russell once or twice in Geelong about ten years ago. Phil. Godspeed to him.”

Jeff Schafer – “Hi Paul

Russell was always "Jacko" in 1968 and 1969.

He was one of the best mates during our training at North Head, Holsworthy and deployment to Vietnam.

Russell had a great sense of humour and was always ready with a joke.

The 1969 Surveyors group reconnected with Russell in 2003 and he was an enthusiastic participant in our Anzac Day reunions in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

Our reunions in Melbourne and Canberra that Russell helped organise were always well attended and very enjoyable. We will all miss him. Jeff Schafer.”

Graeme Owen

shares some photos of Russell – Right and below - Seymour Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



Anzac Luncheon at Crown Casino, Melbourne (2018)

Russ commented on the event - Big Anzac Day for us this year and Graeme Owen and Michael Quinlan had the pleasure of organising a fiftieth anniversary event in Melbourne. Great turn up with 21 in attendance (partners included) for the three days of festivities. Michael Quinlan penned a very good piece about this event which you included in the last *Eyes and Ears*.





From left Jeff Schafer, Russ and Michael (Mick) Delaney (since passed on 17/02/2013)
Photo taken at Peter Badcoe Club – Vung Tau.

Paul Dickson –

Having never met Russ our friendship grew through emails. However, Russ was in constant communication with me via my quarterly “Catching up to say g’day” Mail Outs.

Through an *Eyes and Ears* series called “Passions” we learned about his passion for model cars, of which he collected and sold heaps, his involvement in sports cars – both racing and hill climbing – he was an interesting character and great to communicate with.

The following is an extract from a recent email from Russ with regards to his failing health which I thought was pertinent with regards to mates. He asked me not to publish this email at the time –

“...Two great Vietnam mates **Graeme Owen** and **Jeff Schafer** are keeping a close watch on me.

I have really valued our correspondence and greatly admire the work you do with the Association.

I will take this opportunity, Paul to thank you for all the contact and for the friendship that you have demonstrated to me over a period of time. Margot and I have appreciated it.

Stay well.

Best Regards to you and Helen.

Russ and Margot.”

He won’t be forgotten.

...the following is just a “small” sample of Russ’s “Passions” of collectable cars and his Racing “Passion” -



At left is the MGA I used to race in hill climbs, quarter mile sprints and circuit racing. This car, which I retired from racing and owned for a total of forty years, ended up being sold to a collector in Gloucester UK.

Also included is the Mini Cooper S I used in motorkhanas and sprints during the 1970’s.



Russell’s Locator Profile (as at 23.09.11)....it’s a great memory read -

Locator Profile

Surname: Jackson **Given Name:** Russell

Nickname: Jacko

DoB: 08.03.45

State of Origin: Vic

What did you do before the army: I was called up in second year at Melbourne University in the 1st National Service intake and was granted a deferment to complete a Science Degree and Secondary School Teaching qualifications. At that stage I was a bonded student on a generous scholarship with the Victorian Education Department. In third year I was offered a research teaching fellowship in the University's school of Physiology which was accepted by the Education Department as a way of serving my bond, however the Army in their wisdom would not accept it and indicated that I would have to immediately finish my deferment and go in with the next intake unless I continued my teacher training as planned. As it turned out, I was given an extra year as a practising teacher in 1967, before being requested to attend Puckapunyal RTB at the beginning of 1968 as part of the 11th intake. Corps training was at North Head where I was trained as an artillery surveyor. Apart from the rigors of the artillery school, I greatly enjoyed Manly with the Brookvale Pub and others being regularly visited. A posting to Holsworthy followed with jungle training at Canungra, prior to a Qantas flight to Saigon.

Army service dates from: 31.01.68 to 30.01.70 **Regt No:** 3793090

If National service, then Intake: 1st deferred to the 11th

If served in SVN, then dates: from 25.02.69 to 28.11.69

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

131 Div Loc Bty based in Nui Dat but frequently in the field on survey missions, throughout and beyond Phuoc Tuy province including FSB's and a remapping exercise which saw us having to locate old French markers to get the survey grid back on synch after the US had stuffed it up. Lots of Huey travel and joint missions with the US army (usually bloody disasters). As well as survey work I qualified as a driver, worked night shifts in the Nui Dat sound ranging bunker, had listening post duties and spent time on equipment and site maintenance. Only time off was five days R&R in Hong Kong.

Who were you in the service with: Most of my Vietnam group meet each year at Anzac Day and in recent years we have marched in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane Apart from Anzac Days we keep in reasonably regular contact and where possible enjoy catching up over a lunch etc I was with a great group of blokes in Vietnam who included Kevin Browning, Brian Smythe, Jim Merchant, Jim Lockhart, Graeme Owen, Terry Erbs, Michael Delaney, Brett Rainsford, John Henshaw, Don Chalmers, Ric Mahoney, Jeff Schafer, Peter Larkin, Peter Creedon, John Las and Randall Jones amongst others.

Last Rank: Temp Bdr

What did you do after the army: In March 1970, I married Margot who had waited patiently through my army sabbatical. I'm still happily married after 40 + years with two great kids, a son and a daughter 34 and 37 years of age. I went back to teaching in February 1970 after three weeks of absolute bullshit at Watsonia Barracks where I was required to report at 7.30 a.m. every morning to pick up papers, change water in fire buckets and sweep paths. Not a bad homecoming, particularly seeing that I was living in Geelong at that stage. This all added to my grievance with the State of Victoria.

My major beef being that in other States, most government employees, on National Service, had their pay made up so that there was no net loss of earnings during the two years of compulsory service. The Victorian Education Department decided not to do this and even requested, in order to keep my superannuation going that I make contributions from my Army pay.

The net result was that when I got married I didn't have too many bikkies in the bank and financially was far more than two years behind my colleagues who had missed the marble.

I soon realised how consuming bitterness can be and threw myself into work, social activities, played pennant squash, ran at least 8Km every morning, bought a sports car and went circuit racing and hill climbing. Work was good in those days and I was earning real money but probably spending it just as quickly as it was coming in.

In total I had nearly forty years in secondary schools, the last eighteen of which were in the Principal class and my last ten were as the Principal of a complex, multicultural, school in Geelong. I retired from the Education Department in 2002 but went back to work as a school reviewer for a short time and then had six years with Victoria Teachers Credit Union as a relationship officer. My last job was at Deakin University lecturing in Chemistry to international students.

A major health scare in March 2010 put paid to that employment.

I am now a self-funded retiree, still regaining my health after last year's dramas while watching my superannuation head off to the Bahamas.

Margot and I are travellers, having covered most of Europe, UK and bits of South East Asia. With a son who is a Swedish resident we have also seen quite a bit of Scandinavia. We have yet to see much of northern Australia and intend doing some touring over the next couple of years but without the obligatory caravan!!! After 40 years of abusing the daylights out of caravan owners on our roads I can't turn around and join them now. Besides what has the grey army done to caravan prices and caravan park fees???

A group of us went to Vietnam in 2008 as a forty year celebration and revisited Nui Dat, Vung Tau and were in Long Tan for the August memorial service. Five couples were in the party with four of the fellas having been in Vietnam together. Some photos are enclosed.

After not doing anything for years regarding Vietnam health issues I have, this year, gained a Gold Card on a 100% disability pension. Should have put my hand up years ago but!!! My scare in 2010 was readily accepted as service based.

Anything else of interest:

I still have one of the sports cars I used to race. The car is just as fast but the driver has definitely lost an edge or three. A “compulsive disorder” has seen me amass a more than substantial collection of diecast model cars over the last twenty years. Friends quietly suggest every now and then that I should be getting some treatment for this particular addiction.

What city / town do you live in now: Geelong where I was born.

The first two photos are of Vietnam 2008. Firstly back on Vung Tau beach at the Badcoe club and secondly at what had been our camp site in Nui Dat with a cold can of VB. Peter Larkin, myself, Peter Creedon and Brian Smythe.



Then Evening drinks at the James Menz club.

Peter Larkin has a couple of memories –

at left - Travelled back to Vietnam in 2014 with myself, Russell, Peter Creedon and Brian Smythe. We shared a VB on the site of our 131 battery location.



The last photos are from an amazing collection of Graeme Owen's and show me in 1969 at work on the tellurometer with Mick Quinlan and Sgt (?) as well as the theodolite with Graeme Owen and Jim Lockhart.



Ed – The following photos have been extracted from *Eyes and Ears* archives and record some very fond memories of Russell and mates...



Pete Creedon (on top) and Russ – Jim Menz Club



At the Badcoe Club (Vung Tau)
Left to right Mick Quinlan, Russ Jackson, Jeff Schafer, Peter Szabo (fingers) and others



Russ wondering if this “spotter aircraft” might possibly be going to drop off some morning tea?

ANZAC Day 2011 - Jeff Schafer, Russell Jackson, B Rainsford, Peter Creedon, P Larkin, Mick Quinlan, Graeme Owen



Peter Creedon -
“Hi Paul, thought we would send a photo taken on August 18th, 2016 at the Det131 Unit site. We went there before heading to Long Tan.
Front left to right in photo - friend Barry (non-veteran), myself, Hai (our Vietnamese guide we have used on each of our visits - he was a former ARVN soldier who worked with the Americans as an interpreter during the war, in Phuoc Tuy Province), Russell Jackson, and Russell's wife Margo in the background.
Regards, Peter - (2 essays in 2 days is a bit much!!!)

L-R Peter Larkin, Brett Rainsford, Brian Smyth, Kevin Browning, Michael Quinlan, John Henshaw, Jeff Shafer, Peter Creedon, Russ Jackson and Graeme Owen. Jim Merchant arrived soon after.





ANZAC Day, Melbourne, 2014

The group included - Peter Larkin, John Delacca, Al Adams, Don Chalmers, Ian Kennedy, Mike Butler, Peter Bennett, Graham Williams, Pete Creedon, Russ Jackson, Graeme Owen, John Henshaw, Jeff Schafer, Mitch Miller, Brian Smythe and Terry Erbs [where were Mick Quinlan and Kev Browning?]

There are heaps more photos in *Eyes and Ears* Vol 7 No 5 May 2014 to view.

May They Rest in Peace, and Never be Forgotten.



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

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

Hope we hear from you?

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

. Other related sites...

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION
The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield

Website: <https://www.locatingartillery.org>



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

www.artilleryhistory.org

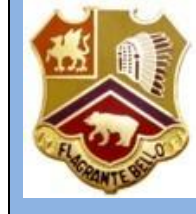


Website link - <http://www.vvaa.org.au/>

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

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](http://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com)



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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