

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**



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



31A on SAS hill - 1970

"Barbers Shop" - 1967

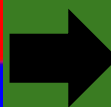
"Pioneers" - 1966

Radar Troop - 1970

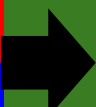
"Original Long Tan Cross" - 69



Prior 1952



1952-60



1960



70 Years since 31st Battery was re-designated as

131 Locating Battery, Royal Australian Artillery on 10th July, 1954

We all have played, and continue to play, a role in its evolvement as it stands today and into the future...

The Battery was first raised in 1952 as 31 Battery and was re-designated as **131 Locating Battery Royal Australian Artillery on 10th July, 1954.**

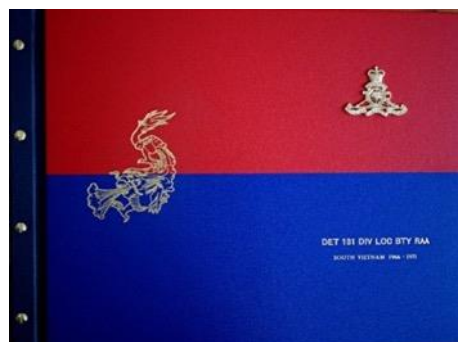
Our role in South Vietnam began when the advance party of Detachment 131 Div Loc Bty RAA departed Sydney N.S.W. aboard H.M.A.S. Sydney on 22nd April 1966; two days after the fourth intake of National Servicemen had commenced their military training. The remainder of the advance party departed from Richmond R.A.A.F. base on the 4th May 1966. The Detachment formation remained in South Vietnam until May 1971 and was disbanded on the 31st July 1971.

The Detachments' role in South Vietnam got its roots back in World War 1 when the task to identify enemy artillery became more necessary, then with the establishment of our predecessor, 31 Battery; in 1954 the world of Locating took on a professional edge.

The Battery in the 60's continued the development of the art of "enemy artillery" detection with various methods and equipment along the lines of observation through outposts called Listening Posts (LP) where muzzle flashes, suspicious movements were noted and bearings from the LP relayed to the Artillery Intelligence (Arty Tac) centre for collation and response action. Radar became an integral part of early warning and tracking of enemy hostilities along with Sound Ranging which used a system of microphones to track the same activities. Intermingled amongst these activities was the necessity for Artillery Surveying which heightened the need for exactness in positioning and measurement. As a post exercise actual physical Crater Analysis was carried out to determine the direction that the projectile came from, also distance calculations from projectile entry angle and the type of weapon that was used. Later sensor equipment has included infra-red, thermal imagery acoustic and seismic devices and add to that today's technology of unmanned drones – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), hence the development of Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA), which evolved with the new 131 STA Battery. This Battery has served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

HAPPY 70th BIRTHDAY 131!!!

. 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 2024.

Our current list contains the names of **96** Locators (as at 31.07.2024) 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 JULY's Birthday List, below, where there are ?? 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. **I have 252 recipients (Association).**

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.

Date	Name	Regt No	DoB	SVN In	SVN Out	DVA Location
1	Phillip Francis Ross T/Bdr	3794468	1947	06 05 1969	30 04 1970	Melbourne

2	John Douglas Greenway	3790617	1946	24 10 1967	22 10 1968	Melbourne
3	Leslie Paul Smithlester	1201202	1949	23 09 1968	24 09 1969	Goondiwindi, Qld
9	Terry Leslie Welsh	4721779	1949	03 03 1971	29 06 1971	Prospect, SA 131
	" "			30 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd REGT
9	Garry James Grimwood	2795771	1949	24 03 1971	01 07 1971	Paddington, NSW 131
	" "			01 07 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
13	Robert Andrew Bruce	4718049	1945	11 06 1967	13 12 1967	?, SA
15	John McDonald Pollock Bdr	53860	1939	{17 04 1967	24 05 1967	Cottesloe, WA 131
	" "			{05 02 1971	07 04 1971	12 Fd REGT
23	Robert John Etherington	66962	1946	04 11 1969	19 11 1970	Hobart

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

Paul Dickson

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

. Insights and Recollections...

This topic/s have raised 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

Vietnam War 1962–75 A continuing extract from the Australian War Memorial website...

The following year the Australian government felt that Australia's involvement in the conflict should be both strong and identifiable. In March 1966 the government announced the dispatch of a taskforce to replace 1RAR, consisting of two battalions and support services (including a RAAF squadron of Iroquois helicopters), to be based at Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy province. Unlike 1RAR, the taskforce was assigned its own area of operations and included conscripts who had been called up under the National Service Scheme, introduced in 1964.

All nine RAR battalions served in the taskforce at one time or another, before it was withdrawn in 1971; at the height of the Australian involvement it numbered some 8,500 troops.

In July 1966, RAAF fighter pilots began serving as airborne forward air controllers (FACs) flying USAF aircraft supporting allied ground forces by directing strike aircraft against enemy targets on the ground. Thirty-six Australian FACs served between 1966 and 1971. A third RAAF squadron (of Canberra jet bombers) was also committed in 1967, and destroyers of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) joined US patrols off the North Vietnamese coast. The RAN also contributed a clearance diving team and a helicopter detachment that operated with the US Army from October 1967.

In August 1966 a company of 6RAR was engaged in one of Australia's heaviest actions of the war, in a rubber plantation near Long Tan. The 108 soldiers of D Coy held off an enemy force, estimated at over 2000, for four hours in the middle of a tropical downpour. They were greatly assisted by a timely ammunition resupply by RAAF helicopters, close fire support from Australian artillery, and the arrival of reinforcements in APCs as night fell. The armoured vehicles had been delayed because they had to 'swim' across a flooded creek and fight through groups of enemy on the way. When the Viet Cong withdrew at night fall they left behind 245 dead, but carried away many more casualties. Seventeen Australians were killed and 25 wounded, with one dying of wounds several days later.

The year 1968 began with a major offensive by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, launched during the Vietnamese lunar new year holiday period, known as "Tet". Not only the timing but the scale of the offensive came as a complete surprise, taking in cities, towns, and military installations throughout South Vietnam. While the "Tet Offensive" ultimately ended in military defeat for the communists, it was propaganda victory.

US military planners began to question if a decisive victory could ever be achieved and the offensive stimulated US public opposition to the war.

For Australian troops, the effects of the offensive were felt around their base at Nui Dat, where a Viet Cong attack on targets around Ba Ria, the provincial capital, was repulsed with few casualties.

By 1969 anti-war protests were gathering momentum in Australia. Opposition to conscription mounted, as more people came to believe the war could not be won. A "Don't register" campaign to dissuade young men from registering for conscription gained increasing support and some of the protests grew violent.

The US government began to implement a policy of "Vietnamisation", the term coined for a gradual withdrawal of US forces that would leave the war in the hands of the South Vietnamese. With the start of the phased withdrawals, the emphasis of the activities of the Australians in Phuoc Tuy province shifted to the provision of training to the South Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces.

At the end of April 1970 US and South Vietnamese troops were ordered to cross the border into Cambodia. While the invasion succeeded in capturing large quantities of North Vietnamese arms, destroying bunkers and sanctuaries, and killing enemy soldiers, it ultimately proved disastrous.

By bringing combat into Cambodia, the invasion drove many people to join the underground opposition, the Khmer Rouge, irreparably weakening the Cambodian government. When the Khmer Rouge came to power in April 1975, it imposed a cruel and repressive regime that killed several million Cambodians and left the country with internal conflict that continues today. The extension of the war into a sovereign state, formally neutral, inflamed anti-war sentiment in the United States and provided the impetus for further anti-war demonstrations in Australia. In the well-known Moratorium marches of 1970 and 1971, more than 200,000 people gathered to protest against the war, in cities and towns throughout the country.

By late 1970 Australia had also begun to wind down its military effort in Vietnam. The 8th Battalion departed in November (and was not replaced), but, to make up for the decrease in troop numbers, the Team's strength was increased and its efforts became concentrated in Phuoc Tuy province. The withdrawal of troops and all air units continued throughout 1971 – the last battalion left Nui Dat on 7 November, while a handful of advisers belonging to the Team remained in Vietnam the following year.

In December 1972 they became the last Australian troops to come home, with their unit having seen continuous service in South Vietnam for ten and a half years.

Australia's participation in the war was formally declared at an end when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January 1973. The only combat troops remaining in Vietnam were a platoon guarding the Australian embassy in Saigon (this was withdrawn in June 1973).

In early 1975 the communists launched a major offensive in the north of South Vietnam, resulting in the fall of Saigon on 30 April. During April a RAAF detachment of 7–8 Hercules transports flew humanitarian missions to aid civilian refugees displaced by the fighting and carried out the evacuation of Vietnamese orphans (Operation Babylift), before finally taking out embassy staff on 25 April.

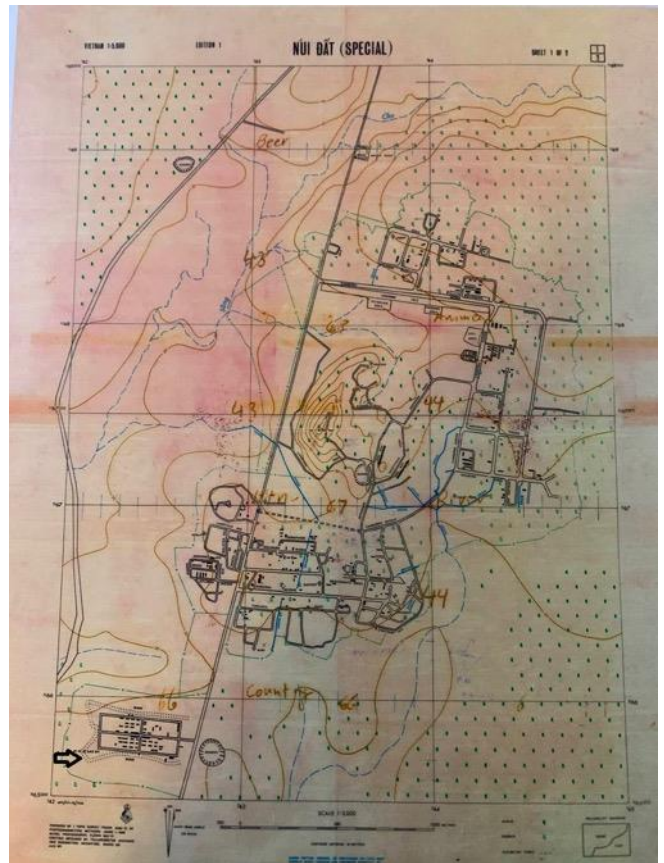
From the time of the arrival of the first members of the Team in 1962 over 60,000 Australians, including ground troops and air force and navy personnel, served in Vietnam; 523 died as a result of the war and almost 2,400 were wounded. The war was the cause of the greatest social and political dissent in Australia since the conscription referendums of the First World War. Many draft resisters, conscientious objectors, and protesters were fined or gaoled, while some**** soldiers met a hostile reception on their return home.

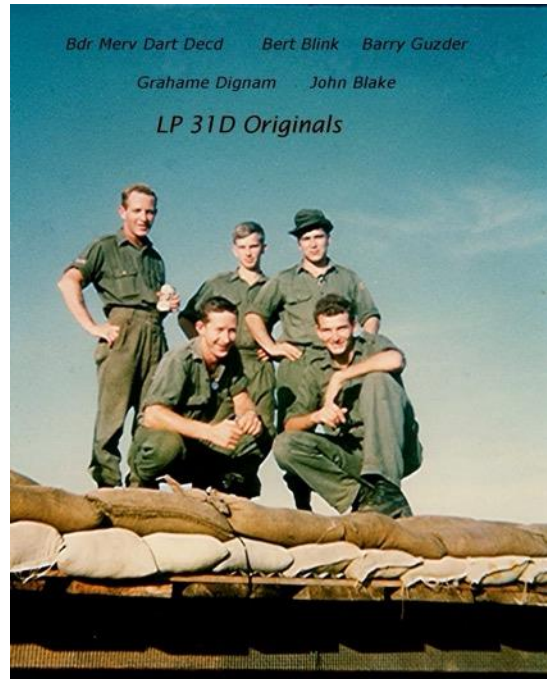
**** “some” (from above) could be an understatement

Ed – An interesting reflection.

Bob Billiards started an interesting interaction with his Facebook post...

“Found a map of 1ATF from 1967/68 which includes the 1/83rd Artillery compound on the southern area of the main Nui Dat base. It was LP 31D and possibly was only active for maybe just over 12 months. The US artillery moved out in April 1968 and the LP closed in June 68 after Coral/Balmoral as it was too difficult to support without a permanent unit there. Originally in the US sentry post 6 on the SW corner of the berm but moved on top of that post in October 67.”





...and this got Grahame Dignam to respond -

"The originals who opened the 31D site below on 13th June '67 changed when reo's arrived from OZ in late June. Bdr Dart is deceased and all 4 Gnrs are alive and well to-day!"

. Unknown Dates of Deaths continues to be updated...as at 31.07.2024 –

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. Sadly, we've added Edward "Spike" George Chase's passing this month.

10 Year Detachment/131 Battery Death Periods

										<u>Total</u>
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	3	0	57
Unknowns*										2
Total										144

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 **31.07.2024**.

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

This following sections have now been updated as of 31.07.2024 and show a clear picture of Battery/Detachment Members that have incomplete Date of Death details.

Here are the names and details –

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 Unknow 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 – 7 gaps to go!

Name	Rank	Regt No	Section	SVN	DoB	DoD
O'Keefe, Michael Francis	Gnr	2787168		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.

AN INVESTIGATION 181 Days

. The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM)

The following is an update on the RVCM Project...

Richard Barry forwarded the following (19.07.24)...

The definition of "wounded in action" has now evolved to include not only physical injuries but also psychological ones like PTSD. Some veterans did not serve the 181 days in Vietnam to qualify for this medal, but it is now acknowledged that many who served suffered psychological "wounds" and were subsequently diagnosed with PTSD.

A number of Veterans who previously did not qualify have now appealed and applied for the medal based on the above criteria and it has been approved. I have assisted 20 veterans to receive the RVCM in the mail with a further 55 more waiting on a decision. ***This is on the basis that DVA has accepted their PTSD was a result of war service.***

If you consider that you may now be entitled to the medal, then you first need to ring 1800 333 362 and connect to Defence Honours and Awards. You will need to have proof from DVA that your PTSD was a result of your war service. They might ask for other documentation and will give you a reference number.

I am keeping a confidential record to avoid any duplication. Please let me know (1) as soon as you apply and (2) when you receive the RVCM. Even if you are not interested your kids and grandkids will be in time.

If you prefer NOT to receive any more emails on this subject please let me know straight away.

Kind regards

Richard Barry OAM.

richyvon47@hotmail.com



A great memorable for Rieny Nieuwenhof...

Presentation of the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal by the Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles MP and the Hon. Libby Coker, Federal member for Corangamite. This rectified an injustice after 53 years of advocacy on behalf of 2,500 National Servicemen who, through no decision of theirs, were denied this medal. Even though 'short timers' they faced danger like so many full tour conscripts. Big shout out to **Richard Barry OAM** who has fought for years on behalf of so many National Servicemen.



Paul Dickson - "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."



Artillery LENDS Dignity To What Would Otherwise Be A Vulgar Brawl...

An interesting quote...

"Artillery adds dignity to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl."

Frederick the Great

Ernie Newbold – supplied the link to the above "Artillery Quotes" article above and then added an interesting one of his own for comment with regards the Battle of Long Tan by at the time Maj. Harry Smith, CO Delta Company 6RAR...

"Of particular note for this month's edition is one from Maj. Harry Smith, the C.O. of Delta Company 6 RAR at the battle of Long Tan. Many recent literary quotes regarding the battle of Long Tan claim that a small number of Australian Soldiers defeated a much larger number of enemy on the 18th August 1966 without mentioning the Artillery support provided from Nui Dat. Our **Pioneers** who were at Nui Dat on that day actually provided support to the Gun Batteries by unpacking and carrying ammunition to the guns on that August afternoon, just ask any of our pioneers who are still with us what it was like.

Much of the timber from the ammunition cases was later used for flooring in our tents at Nui Dat

Kind regards,

Ernie."

Ok Pioneers – any comments?

Mail Call...

Ted Jux –

“Hi Paul,
Searching through some old photos I found this which was taken in
1970 around a third of a way up Nui Dat hill.
I wonder if anyone knows what it is ?
I was looking for orchids at the time.
Regards, Ted Jux.”



Terry Erbs forwarded the following article regarding the explanation by the ADF into the new drone – SWITCHBLADE 300 – it’s an interesting read...



Continued below...

ADF enters drone age after years of indecision



BEN PACKHAM
COMMENTATOR

The Australian Defence Force will finally get killer drones – 30 years after they first made their mark on the battlefield.

Perhaps it was the shock of being beaten to the punch by even Yemen's Houthis rebels that finally got the capability across the line.

The Albanese government is overhauling itself for providing "world-leading lethality and protection" for Australian troops, in an announcement on Monday that the ADF will get US-made Switchblade 300 drones.

In truth, Australian governments of both persuasions have been far too late to invest in armed drones, placing ADF personnel at risk.

For a country with a \$55bn defence budget, it's a national embarrassment that it's taken until now to equip the ADF with these 21st-century weapons.

The US's feared Predator drone entered service in 1995, debuting in the 2001 war in Afghanistan. It has been fielded by American forces as long as it is in the process of being retired.

Now the focus is on cheaper drones that can overwhelm an enemy by sheer numbers.

The ADF's obsession with acquiring the biggest and the best

Military personnel, bases left exposed to missile threats

Continued from Page 1

key role in any US-China conflict over Taiwan. "They will need integrated air and missile defences, there's no two ways about it," he said. "At the moment, the Americans will probably bring their own, I suspect."

Lieutenant General Leahy said the ADF's failure to invest in missile defence systems was in stark contrast to the potential threat. "We know that likely adversaries have extensive and long-range missile capabilities and can rain them on our bases in the north of Australia," he said. "We will be naked without a capability to intercept them."

Lieutenant General Leahy said the government needed to "get serious and re-evaluate" the budget to fund the necessary systems. "Right now we need a 'guns budget' but we have been lined up with successive 'butter budgets'," he said.

(think nuclear-powered submarines, eye-wateringly expensive frigates) has blinded it to what military strategists describe as "the small, the smart and the many".

As the war in Ukraine has shown, armed drones can give seemingly outgunned forces an advantage against opponents that would appear far more capable.

Deputy secretary for DSR implementation Tom Hamilton told Senate estimates on June 5 that after a "tough prioritisation" process – which included \$7.2bn in internal cuts – the government had decided to focus on developing "the brains of the system" before investing in missile defence batteries.

"The government has been very clear that we will come back when the technology is ready and have a look at the next phase of acquisition, which will include acquisition of the active missile defence systems," Mr Hamilton said.

Liberal senator David Fawcett took issue with his comment, pointing to Israel's success in defeating incoming missiles. "The technology is ready," the former RAAF test pilot told Mr Hamilton.

Air Marshal Robert Chipman, recently promoted to Vice-Chief of the Defence Force, said the government was still "considering options for integrated air and missile defence". In the meantime, he said the navy's air warfare destroyers, the RAAF's fighter

Defence planners have been alert to this fact for years. The little-known 2020 war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, in which the former overwhelmed the latter with an array of Turkish and Israeli-made drones, proved the point beyond doubt.

Now every rag-tag force with an axe to grind is armed with lethal drones.

jets and the army's short-range NASAMS surface-to-air missile batteries offered air and missile defence capabilities.

The so-called "brains" of the ADF's future missile defences, known as the Joint Air Battle Management System, was earmarked for up to \$7.2bn in funding in Defence's investment plan released in April.

About \$30bn that had been allocated for ballistic missile and medium-range air defence systems in the Coalition's two-decade, 2020 force structure plan was nowhere to be seen.

Lieutenant General Leahy said: "It's fine to have a command and control system but you don't have capability until you've something to shoot."

DSR lead author Peter Dean said the lack of funding for missile defence was "the biggest gap" in the Defence's 10-year investment blueprint. "The war in Gaza and the war in Ukraine in particular have shown that when you are facing everything from drones all the way through to cruise and ballistic missiles, air and missile defence is

absolutely critical," Professor Dean said.

He said a new requirement for biennial updates to the investment plan meant there was still time for the government to come up with necessary funds. "I would encourage the government to re-look at this in the next iteration of the Integrated Investment Program and see how quickly we can get more capability into service more quickly," Professor Dean said.

Defence analyst Marcus Hellyer said the wars in Ukraine and Gaza showed missiles and missile defence systems were new fundamental capabilities.

"What these conflicts are demonstrating is two things: land forces are very resilient in the face of missile and air strikes, and maritime forces are very vulnerable," Dr Hellyer said. "There are different approaches but one is just to suck it up. And that seems to be the approach we are taking; that it is better value for money simply to harden our infrastructure and let the missiles through."

they could achieve the same effect at a fraction of the cost by strapping explosives to commercially available Chinese drones.

Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy has refused to say how many of the drones the ADF will get, or how much the investment is worth.

Conroy says, however, that the government has announced the purchase to "send a deterrent signal to potential aggressors".

That's not amusing if it wasn't so concerning.

China will be completely untroubled by the announcement, given its devastating arsenal of killer drones, not to mention long-range missiles.

The government is also silent on how the ADF will protect its personnel and equipment from these sorts of weapons, despite ample evidence of the need for counter-drone systems.

The army's \$7bn fleet of Roadblock infantry fighting vehicles won't be much good if they can be destroyed by a few remote control aircraft.

The final and most staggering aspect of the announcement is the government's decision to overlook an array of Australian companies offering similar products – some of them developed with millions of dollars of taxpayer support.

The ADF has known for a long time it needed this capability.

It should have decisively backed an Australian player to bring their version to market.

It's no wonder many local defence firms are thinking of giving the game away.



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...

Ernie Newbold – "G'day Paul,

Well I've been thinking about what I could possibly say in response to your email.

Since becoming more involved with my local RSL Club Sub Branch a few years ago I have devoted more time to serving/helping the cause of supporting veterans.

We read and hear frequent references to veteran suicide and the powers that be launched a Royal Commission to see what could be done about it. It seems to me that the DVA, the RSL etc. are working on the problem from the top down and hopefully they will find answers to the problem.

I spoke to my RSL Sub Branch about the subject and said that I suspect many veterans who have served in the ADF and have suffered in some way from having served tend to suffer in silence until they reach their breaking point. Each day in RSL Clubs across Australia the Ode of Remembrance is recited daily. The Ode is actually a few lines from a poem entitled "For the Fallen" written by Laurence Binyon a hundred and ten years ago in 1914, during World War 1. So while it is appropriate to honour the fallen on a daily basis, there is no mention of those veterans who may be silently suffering in some way from their service to their country.

My Sub Branch now offers recognition to those veterans following the Ode of Remembrance at all meetings of the Sub Branch in order to let everyone know that we recognise and acknowledge that there may veterans among us who are suffering in silence and that we are keen to offer help and assistance to them.

The current RSL definition of a veteran is someone who has served just one day in the Australian Defence Force, not just those who have returned from active service overseas.

Sometimes when a veteran passes we may hear a family member at the funeral say that their father, brother, uncle etc. never spoke about their war service very much and I suspect that my family may say the same about me when the time comes. I believe that what we experienced is more about feelings than words and so it is not easy to discuss those feelings with our friends and family who weren't there.

Following the Welcome Home Parade for Vietnam Veterans in 1987 we were able to re-connect with the fellow veterans with whom we had served and at get togethers following the ANZAC Day march.

The day was never long enough to catch up with our mates with whom we had served. We may not have spoken very much about the war but just being with those we knew who had shared the experience and who had similar feelings to our own was just so good.

Now there is group of us who get together once a month for the 131 Locators Committee meeting and I am sure the others look forward to catching up regularly just as I do.

Camaraderie with our fellow veterans is so good, the feeling of being among others who have known and understand our own experience and feelings from war service is so hard to beat. I look forward to the monthly meetings of the TPI Assn in Sydney where there are many Vietnam Veterans from all the different Corps and Services, Navy, Army & Air Force.

Many thanks to you for all the time and effort you put into producing the Eyes & Ears each month as it helps us to remain in touch and connected even though we may be too far apart to meet face to face on a regular basis, it is a big help to maintaining camaraderie within our group of veterans.

The RSL and all the other Ex Service organisations deserve our thanks and gratitude for helping and supporting veterans right across the whole of Australia.

Well I'm not much for writing letters, so it has taken some effort to put my thoughts and feelings into words, I do hope what I have written makes sense to you and the others.

Regards,
Ernie."

Ken Osborne – "Dear Paul, nothing really much is happening in my world, still managing to look after myself to a certain extent, Have a man come in once a fortnight to do some housework and shopping for me, but apart from that I mainly watch the news programs and wonder about the intelligence of people. They all say they are going to do this and that but I cannot see anything positive to date, all pie in the sky.

In regards to DVA they said I could have a couple of hours gardening per month. The only trouble is they cannot get anyone to do it and at the rate they are happy to pay for. They said give them to the end of June for them to get a contractor but nothing happened, so I have got my own and happy to pay the bill myself just to get the job done, I put up a few rants and raves on my Facebook site every now and then to express my concerns but no one takes any notice or if they do they do not make comments, so back to watching, reading or eating and while my life away.

Rather cold at the moment, so try to keep warm and out of trouble. Start my day off doing Wordle, then breakfast and what happens next is up to how I feel or what has to be done. So hope this short missive finds you as fit as you can be for your age ,Regards Ken O."

John Vitkovsky – "G'day Paul,

Finally getting some rain here in Victor Harbor - the local rag reckons that the last 3 or 4 months were the driest on record. 100,000 litres of storage and down to the last 300mm... Anyhow, all good here.

Weekly pistol shooting at the Goolwa Pistol Club. Just purchased a Pardini SP automatic (as used by most Olympic shooters), so getting serious and meeting new blokes who are not part of the South Coast Veterans.

Just hosted my son, his wife and grandson from Brisbane for a few days to celebrate his 50th birthday. Didn't realise I was getting so old? Am about to turn 79. Terrifying.

Heading to Fort Courage with caravan (on the Murray River between Wentworth and Renmark) for a week or so with mates from Mildura in a few days. Then in September, the South Coast Veterans has booked out the Port Vincent caravan park, where we will be camping for a week.

Planning another lap around OZ in early May next year, if I am still alive.

South Coast Veterans are very active, with weekly coffee meetings and monthly dinners at different venues.

Active with the Vincent Owner's Club both here and in the UK. See pic of my pride and joy (at right) - fully restored 1951 Vincent "C" 1000cc V-Twin (and also my wife, Naomi, who has been blessed with my presence for a bit over 40 years...).
Hope all well, John V."



Steve Wynn – “G'day mate,

I will attempt to respond to below a little later. Meantime I will just give you a quick update on medical situation and some self-inflicted injuries.

I can't sit for too long with this injury, so have to make numerous trips to the PC to get things done ha, ha.

I am not sure what I have filled you in on so from the top. I went to the public hospital for not going to toilet for a week and violent dry heaving, vomiting and really crook. Called an ambo and they dumped me in the public emergency, where I sat for 8 hours before getting a bed. Then had to walk everywhere for tests in a huge hospital, bugger. CT scan showed a twisted and blocked small intestine.

Luckily my surgeon was duty doctor at the time and he sorted me out after a few days. I went home and still had problems so my surgeon got me into the private hospital immediately, could not get into the public for months. That hurt the wallet, had to pay hospital, anaesthetist and surgeon up front.

Brilliant stay in the private hospital, wish I could afford it every time, but cannot anymore, far too expensive.

Had my post-op appointment with the surgeon and was told NO bowel cancer but I have diverticulitis, which is bearable.

The very next day I was lifting my petrol mower into the trailer to take to the tip and felt a bang in my left leg, that is why I can't sit or walk too far, very painful still and that was over 3 weeks ago.

Last week I was building myself a mobile, extendable work bench, little bit each day as standing is not too painful now, and injured my right leg, that got infected, puffed up and went red. Almost at the same time I injured my left hand which was causing toothache like pain in my left arm.

Cancer doctor rang to find out why I did not come back for final appraisal and I said I was in hospital, so that was OK.

Really I didn't want to know.

Saw my GP on Wednesday to get some antibiotics for my right leg, after a thorough check up, it turns out I injured my spine and not my left leg, sciatic nerve being pinched off. I need anti-inflammatory pills but can't take them due to being on blood thinners.

Got antibiotics for my right leg, so should be good in a week. Next was hand injury, seems it is an elbow injury causing the pain into my hand, not a hand injury.

So all up I have 2 legs, a left arm/hand and spine causing me pain, oh yippee. GP made appointment with cancer doctor for 2 weeks' time, they are determined not to let me get away without final (hopefully) testing. It is not looking good at the moment though, however my diagnosis of all the above was way off course so I may be wrong again.

I remember being wrong once before but it was so long ago that I forget when and what I was wrong about. No one is perfect eh.

Take care mate and look after Helen.

Steve Wynn.”

Graham and Jenni Williams – “Hola Paul and Helen,

Glad to hear you got a big tick from the Docs on your last visit. A plus that no op will be necessary in the foreseeable future.

Not a great deal has happened here since I returned from another trip to Vietnam. This time also visited Thailand.

We have had strange weather since my return. Mostly rain, unusual at this time of year here but plenty of it along with wind so the skin is not faring well at all.

Having SFA by way of immunity once again came home with some kind of travel bug....par for the course these days.

Doctors could not get a handle on it but suspected chest infection of some kind, not flu or covid. Anyway, took 3 courses of antibiotics to clear it up but am back to my usual self again now and fine.

With so much rain have spent time reading, organizing a few bits and pieces for Keith Ayliffe, planning future trips up to the end of 2025 and getting a large heap of old family photos onto the computer.

The sun finally came out yesterday and again today so hopefully things will dry out soon and I can play catch up in the yard. Not so much looking forward to that.

Jenni is doing well after her heart attack. Presently in Newcastle and catching up with her sisters again. They are doing school reunions as well as a street party reunion from where they used to live. It is good to see she is getting out and about regularly now.

This morning drove into town for an early morning breakfast with an old workmate from Arundel Hills Country Club. After that drove round to Rainbow Bay to check the surf. Good swell running for over a week now. Then wandered around the beachfront from Rainbow Bay to Kirra. The rehased Kirra Pub opened last November but haven't got to check it out till now. It is on the ground floor of a new high rise there (one of 4 being built on the site)....had 2 amber ales there as I checked it out but found it was not anything to get excited about. On the floor above they have put in what they call a beach bar.....seems to be the rage on the Gold Coast at present. All very posh but looked at the prices. Enough for me to put a line through it for entertainment. Ridiculous.....neither were well patronized at the time.

Anyway, that's my news in a nutshell. Hope you are both keeping well and keep up the good work at the animal shelter.

Hopefully they knock them out before you shave them.

Cheers,

G.W.”

Kevin Browning – “Hi Paul,

As usual, when I do reply, it is late. Sorry I couldn't hang around at the last General Meeting but had a specialists appointment to go to. Wanted to let the Group know about the new book and was very pleased they agreed to the Life Membership for the Regimental Fund.

The trip was great highlight being catching up with a couple of the Brits that were on the Long Gunnery Course with me. One in particular who lives in York took us around the town and gave us a great time. We spent a couple of weeks on the Isle of Wight. Stayed with an old neighbour from Larkhill days. She had been out here three times and stayed with us and invited us there but because of Lynne's Mum we couldn't get over there. With Lynne's Mum's passing last year we were able to go. Had a great time on the Isle, it is really a collection of things in England. Carisbrook Castle is a medieval castle where Charles I was imprisoned after being captured on the Isle. Osborne House was Queen Victoria's 'holiday' home and where she died. Both places were well worth the visit.

Went over to Portsmouth and saw the Victory, really only inside it the outside was covered in scaffolding. Also saw the Warrior, the first ironclad battle ship of the Brits and also saw the Mary Rose. The latter is inside and a fantastic display. Visit to the place wasn't cheap at 40 pound but I can go back on the ticket during the year. Might not be able to take advantage though.

We drove from the south of England up to Scotland and very thankful for the navigator in the car even though at times it could have been better. Took an exit early on a roundabout and rather than telling us it was re-calculating it let us enjoy the scenery before the road ended and we had to turn around. Luckily it was only a little over 5 miles, yes miles! Went to Balmoral Castle in Scotland, where Queen Elizabeth II died. Now that isn't a bad holiday home. Also went back to Castle Athol where I thought I could recall a portrait of a family member some hundreds of years past that they painted exactly. He was cross-eyed. Felt good to know my memory wasn't that bad as I did find him again. The Earl of Athol is the only person in Europe officially allowed to have a private army. Then as part of the tour they tell us he, and his father before him, lives in South Africa but comes back each year for the highland gathering.

Went to Edinburgh Castle twice, couldn't get in first time as it was fully booked and this was at the start of the tourist season. Prior bookings is almost essential to ensure entry to most tourist attractions, hate to think what it is like at the height of the tourist season. One great moment though was an unplanned visit to Rosslyn Chapel, made famous in Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code. We had an hour to spare so took the opportunity to go and take a photo of the Chapel. Of course it is now a tourist mecca, and yes you needed to have booked. I told the lady at the front desk all I wanted to do was take photo, you couldn't get a shot without entering the chapel area. She took pity and let me in, then followed us and told us we could go into the chapel as well. A very generous gesture and believe me a visit there is worthwhile.

Then off to Ireland for a few days and accommodation there was hard to find because of the Ukraine refugees. But still saw what we wanted to before heading back to the Isle of Wight.

Next we were off to the WW1 battlefields taking the Eurotrain under the English Channel, a bucket list ticked off. Wanted to see the Menin gate ceremony and visit the new museum at Villers Bretonneux. Had to condense a four day tour into two but our guide did a fabulous job and very knowledgeable.

This part of the trip was mainly to commemorate some forebears. Saw the Menin Gate ceremony but couldn't see the names on the wall as the gate is still under scaffolding, well overdue completion. The museum at Villers Bretonneux was disappointing, even the guide said it would be better placed here in Australia. A full tour would take 8 hours and I wonder whether the story the locals need to know would have been clear. Found the Passchendaele museum far more interesting. Of course the trip was to commemorate forebears and had the chance at Villers where their names are commemorated on the wall. Saw plenty of cemeteries and all well cared for. The guide informed us there are three types of cemetery; conflict, hospital and concentration. The conflict contains graves of those killed in a particular battle, hospital those who died at the casualty station and the concentration contained those whose bodies had been brought in after the war to a central area from other sites. In recent times the War Graves people have allowed flowers to be grown on the graves in front of the headstone. Unfortunately these usually cover the family inscriptions that are placed near the base of the headstone and which the family had to pay for. I think it takes away from the experience of the visit as some of those inscriptions are remarkable and show how the loss affected the family. But now most cannot be seen.

We spent the last night in Paris and then off to Istanbul and a visit to Gallipoli and Troy. Gallipoli was something else. All I can say about Troy is that it is a very well organised pile of stones but did give us an opportunity to see more of Turkey. Then followed a few days back in Istanbul which I must confess I still call Constantinople. Had a great time there and Lynne really enjoyed the Bizarre especially the Egyptian Bizarre which is much smaller than the Grand but still has everything. We had intended a quick visit to Egypt but just before we left on our trip things started to heat up in the area with the Iranians rocketing Israel so we had our arrangements changes, didn't want to try and have to do something whilst away. So Turkey enjoyed us for a while longer than initially planned. It was then off home and back to reality. The old body clock took some re-adjusting.

Now I am just waiting for the weather to warm up, it was miserable, wet, for the first couple of weeks back here but we cannot complain. Only two wet days on our trip neither of which interfered with our activities.

Hope all well your end.

Regards

Kevin.”

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

18th August - Vietnam Veterans Day – let us know what you get up to?

OK, you all know the drill – photos and a line or six as to how and where you,
and possibly some mates spent
Friday, 18th August 2024?

58 Years
April 1966 – April 2024



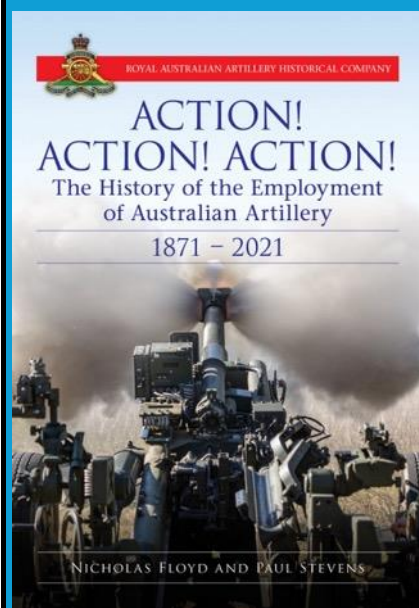
Have you tried to source us or your mates via Facebook?

Why not give it a go, if you haven’t already, just click onto the
Association’s Facebook via the link below, then let us know what you
think...

Hey, you don’t have to have a Facebook page of your own...

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

Bert Blink forwarded the following information with regards to the soon to be released “ACTION ACTION ACTION” book relating the history of the Employment of Australian Artillery since 1871 to 2021 in which 131 is mentioned...



ACTION ACTION ACTION

The History of the Employment of Australian Artillery 1871-2021

Authors: Lieutenant Colonel Nick Floyd /Release Date: 12/Aug/2024

Subject: Australian Gunners; Pages: 288; Book Type: Paperback

Dimensions: 245mm x 170mm; ISBN: 9781923144422

\$19.99

Link to Retailers (price may vary)

booktopia

DYMOCKS

QBD BOOKS Readings

or your local bookstore

Peter Bruce - Please find below the open invitation to attend a service and plaque unveiling at the Vietnam War Memorial at Canungra on Sunday 18 August 2024.
Our combined RAA plaque will be unveiled along with several other Corps and Unit plaques. Kevin O'Brien will deliver the main address during the service which commences at 1100 hours. Please let me know if any Gunners and family members are attending and I will collate and pass numbers to the organisers. Alternatively you may contact the organisers directly.

Any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Peter

Peter Bruce, OAM, JP, President 4th Field Regiment (SVN) Old Boys



Canungra *Vietnam* Memorial INVITATION

Canungra RSL Sub Branch & Kokoda Youth Foundation

Invite you to attend the inaugural

*VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL
SERVICE
SUNDAY 18 AUGUST
11:00 Hrs*

Includes

Laying of Regimental Military Plaques

Location : Kokoda Barracks, Beechmont Road, Canungra
Dress : Coat & Medals
RSVP : by 12 August 2024 by text to 0417 631 941

At conclusion of the service you are invited to attend the Canungra RSL Club in Canungra township for light lunch, refreshments and camaraderie.



The recently opened Vietnam Memorial at Canungra Army Base.





Committee Members:

President: Allen Morley

Vice President: Bert Blink

Treasurer/Secretary: Grahame Dignam

Public Officer: Gordon Malcolm

Webmaster: Bob Billiard

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

July has been an interesting month. Lots has happened and some things will last longer in memory than others. We lost Spike Chase who passed after a long illness. As one of the 131 Pioneers, Spike helped set in place things which made it easier for life in Nui Dat for those following, myself included.

In the US former President Trump was shot at during a Pennsylvania rally. Fortunately, he was neither severely injured nor suffered a fatal wound. President Biden showed some of the symptoms that we early Nashos tend to show at a similar age. The Republican National Convention nominated Donald Trump as their presidential nominee.

The Australian government via the Treasurer said the budget would fight inflation and job insecurity. Unfortunately, neither has happened and another interest rate rise is anticipated, placing more Australian mortgage holders in further jeopardy. But, the announced visit of King Charles III announced during July will be an interesting event for royalists and anti-republicans.

Personally, I am off to Wisconsin USA to attend the Oshkosh airshow. I will be warm for 10 days and experience some historic bombers, many USAF aircraft and a raft of home builds and vintage aircraft. A smorgasbord of aviation types.

Cheers

Allen

58 Years
April 1966 – April 2024



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

Minutes for the General Meeting of the 131 Locators Association Inc.
Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club
26 Humphries Rd, Wakeley NSW 2176
and via Zoom internet on Tuesday 9 th July 2024

Attendees were: Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam, Gordon Malcolm, Kevin Browning, Ernest Newbold, Ged Carroll, Nick Proskurin and Ian Amos.

Zoomed members were: Ron Mason, Terry Erbs, Paul Dickson, Bert Blink, Brian Campbell, Bob Billiards, Rieny Nieuwenhof and Merv Nairn.



Apologies: George Lane, Jim Fitzgerald and other State Reps

Financial Membership Financial Membership is currently **122** plus Associates **2** plus Affiliates **16** Total **140**
Plus Lapsed as at 1/07/2024 **38**

Presidents report.

Allen referenced.

- . LSTAA is arranging the transfer of existing NSW Bank Accounts and Accountability to QLD while we will be assisting in the facilitation. Also, Russ Hamsey QLD President will be retiring this year. We wish him well for the future.
- . Desecration of the Canberra war Memorial investigations have stalled due to no identifiable culprit/s.
- . The DVA has migrated 3 existing Acts in a "harmonization" approach to health issues. Diabetes has been accepted as a war caused issue and Psychological damage also has been accepted.
- . Vietnam Vets day will be commemorated at Canterbury -Hurlstone Park RSL on 17 th August 2024. Local 131 Veterans have been invited to attend by our Member Ernest Newbold who is a Trustee of that club. Contact Sec/Treas for details if required.
- . Bankstown Sports Club will host their usual ceremony and Dinner function for Vietnam Vets Day on 18 th August If it is your preference to attend there. Cost is \$50 per head and please contact Allen Morley for more details if required.

Webmaster Update.

- . Robert advised Facebook members were 473. We are barring anyone who attempts to join to sell non sponsored merch to our members.
- . Members are now calling out imposters to assist Mods.

Health Report:

- . Rieny Nieuwenhof advised that the DVA has changed the definition of "wounded in Action". Psychological injuries have now been accepted and a greater number of Vets would now be eligible to claim.
- . Steve Wynn did not serve Overseas and so does not have a white or Gold Card hence no access to free medical care. Nonetheless he is in great spirits though the body deteriorates.
- . Merv earlier reported he had been referred to Cardiologist. All tests have come back clear, but it was a good experience.

General Business and around the grounds:

Presentation by Kevin Browning:

- . Kevin addressed the meeting regarding a Publication "Action! Action, Action!" (a comprehensive history of Australian artillery from 1871-2021) produced by the "Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company" and is available for \$15 per copy. The Association proposed to purchase a box of 20 for \$300 for presentation items and for individual sale.
- . He also mentioned the publication "RAA Liaison Letter" containing an update of the present state of the RAA in Australia. It also included the "Cannonball" newsletter as well as the history of RAA action during the SVN conflict. A good read.
- . Kevin also reminded us of a prior offer to the Association to become a Life Member of the RAA Gunners Fund for a once only cost of \$260. Funds are used to support RAA gunners/RAA organizations for projects who require assistance. The meeting unanimously agreed to join.

Discussions then ensued on the following:

- . Terry outlined a proposal to record the LSTAA meetings with a program named OTTER. HE obtained approval to record our meeting as a test. We agreed. At the close of the meeting, the test appeared to be very successful with few limitations.

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, 13th August, 2023 at 1100hrs **Venue: to be advised**

Also, available via Zoom link to be advised



. Birthdays in the Battery...August –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	Phillip Francis Ross T/Bdr	3794468	06 05 1969	30 04 1970	
1	Joseph Losiak	218302	04 11 1969	05 11 1970	
1	John Frederick Lucas	3796256	20 02 1970	11 02 1971	
2	John Douglas Greenway	3790617	24 10 1967	22 10 1968	
3	Leslie Paul Smithlester	1201202	23 09 1968	24 09 1969	
3	Michael Hartley Butler	3796958	04 06 1970	09 06 1971	
3	Graham Warren Greenland	2792441	15 04 1970	29 07 1970	† 17.11.2014
4	Andrew John William Overall Lt.	235330	22 02 1969	21 02 1970	

7	Marinus Hendricus Maria Van Driel L/Bdr	38954	27 11 1967	13 03 1968	† 08.08.1998
7	Randall Miles Jones	2788775	29 01 1969	28 11 1969	
8	Arthur Gordon Luxford Sgt.	212803	20 01 1969	28 01 1970	† 01.01.2008
8	Edwin Leslie Lewis Sgt.	53909	18 03 1970	11 03 1971	† 26.08.1992
9	Terry Leslie Welsh	4721779	03 03 1971	29 06 1971	131
	" "		30 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd REGT
9	Garry James Grimwood	2795771	24 03 1971	01 07 1971	131
	" "		01 07 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
10	David John Troedel	326409	N/A		132DLB † 13.05.2021
	Alan "Big Al" James Thompson Bdr	42308	20 05 1966	22 06 1967	† 07.10.2015
13	Brian Hackett	2783449	03 01 1967	12 12 1967	
13	Stanley John Briggs	1731999	27 11 1967	17 09 1968	
13	Robert Andrew Bruce	4718049	11 06 1967	13 12 1967	
15	John McDonald Pollock Bdr	53860	{17 04 1967	24 05 1967	131
	" "		{05 02 1971	07 04 1971	12 Fd REGT
15	Kevin James Taylor	2791357	30 07 1969	23 07 1970	† 03.08.2023
15	Norman Ronald Keith McManua WO2	26202	09 11 1970	19 08 1971	† 04.10.2016
17	Pierre Ramon Goss T/Sgt	213990	24 03 1969	25 03 1970	† 06.08.2011
17	Kenneth John "Bluey" Peisley L/bdr	2787174	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	† 31.08.2016
20	Peter John Binns Bdr	356367	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
22	John Robert Vickary	1732218	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
22	Stuart Wyndham Sporn	4718471	04 05 1967	30 01 1968	
22	Anthony Patrick Coutts	1733291	29 01 1968	21 01 1969	† 31.08.1988
23	Robert John Etherington	66962	04 11 1969	19 11 1970	
24	Johan Molenkamp	2795074	03 03 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "		02 07 1971	09 08 1971	12 Fd REGT
25	Leslie David Frost	215230	22 04 1966	28 04 1967	† 26.03.2014
25	Kenneth Barry Jones	2786931	27 11 1967	26 11 1968	
25	Colin Walter West	2152525	20 01 1969	21 01 1970	
26	Yarema "Max" Troynar	3790244	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
26	Stanley Edward Patterson L/Bdr	38451	29 01 1969	28 11 1969	
26	Michael John Uniakie		130GLB/133 DLB	N/a	† 27.09.2021
27	Laurence Joseph Farr	1734257	27 08 1969	25 02 1970	† 05.01.2009
27	Kenneth John Peisley L/Bdr	2787174	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	† 26.03.2014
27	Gordon Malcolm	2785906	26 09 1967	17 09 1968	
27	Peter Francis Whitaker	2786848	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
27	Peter Desmond Creedon T/Bdr	2790207	31 01 1969	28 01 1970	
27	Grant Perrins	1734509	27 11 1969	04 06 1970	
28	David Leslie Pimm - Craftsman	215746	17 04 1967	23 04 1968	RAEME
29	Timothy Roger Ford Capt.	235300	19 08 1970	05 08 1971	
31	Stephen Edward Palmer T/Cpl	18820	12 04 1968	30 04 1969	RAEME † 03.12.1972

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

Ed – 8 blokes not highlighted is looking decidedly better, but still not acceptable! Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

. Locator Profiles – we've received **176. 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.

The passing of a Detachment "Pioneer"...

Grahame Dignam sent the following email re "Spike's" passing – "George Lane called to advise "Spike" had passed away (Motor Neurone) . He said he would call back when more details were known. He called again later in the day and advised that the service would be private and that no ceremony was planned. Date of Death Friday 12th. Graham."...



Name: Chase, Edward "Spike" George

Service No: 2782043 Rank: Gnr

SVN In: 04.05.1966 SVN Out: ?14.12.1966

DoB: 30.06.1945 DoD: 12. 07.2024

Lest We Forget



Ed – Here's a great memory read from a "Pioneer" who allowed us to acquaint with him via his Locator Profile...

Locator Profile

Surname: Chase **Given Name:** Edward **Nickname:** "Spike" **DoB:** 30/03/45 **State of Origin:** N.S.W.

What did you do before the army: Dairy farmer, Truck Driver, lime & superphosphate spreader.

Army service dates from: 30/06/6 to 29/06/67 **Regt No:** 2782043

If National service, then Intake: First. **If served in SVN, then dates: from** 04/05/66 **to** 14/12/66

Battery/s Activity/s (Bty/s served in, Sections of Bty/s worked in, locations, dates etc): Hi Paul. I've still got some photos to send you, but I've been as busy as a one-armed painter with crabs, however from memory this is my time in Vietnam.

Left Richmond in chartered Qantas plane 4/5/66. If I remember correctly we landed in Townsville & had to wait there for a couple of hours because somebody found a bolt or something on the strip. From there we went to Manila, where we were allowed off the plane & sampled our first San Miguel. Next stop Saigon where we were allowed into the slab of beer that "Lofty" had tried to take on board back at Richmond. It was a real race to get rid of it before it got too hot.

We then were into a Caribou for scenic flight to Vung Tau and next into a Yank Cattle Truck for a ride out to Camp near the Police Barracks. This was home until 6/6/66, when we moved to Nui Dat. At Vung Tau, if the old noggin is right, we had six blokes to each 12x12 tent, bit squashy.

I was posted to Alpha Radar with, from memory **Don Simmons, Ted Fields, Dave Crowther, "Lofty Hayes, Paul Jones, and Mick McDonnell**. There were more but the head isn't working that well this morning. Our accommodation was in Hutchies for my couple of months with Alpha. Once everything was set up & the Radars had broken down more L.P.s were set up. "**Bluey" Clausen, myself, Paul Jones and Paul Buss** were sent to D Co. 6RAR to become the 3rd L.P. I think 31 Charley. We were in the mud & rubber trees at 6 RAR in probably the worst site for an L.P. in South Vietnam. We were thankfully left behind when D Co. Went to Long Tan. I think we were sent there about July & at daylight on the morning after Long Tan we were moved to B Co. 5 RAR. I think we took over from **Dave Doyle**, but can't remember if we kept 31 Charlie or not.

I went on R&R from that location in Sept. & not long after moved to H.Q. Battery where I lived in a tent with **Karl Doehrmann & Terry Westerway**. For a while I was in the Q Store with **Robbie Robinson**.

The next move was to Bravo Radar under **Fred Lennon** (one of nature's pure gentlemen). Also there was **Garry Luscombe, George Lane, Ray Smith, Laurie Sawyer and Merv Nairn**. I shared a tent there with **Norm Bullen**. Soon came the great news that some of us were coming home early. At the time the Qantas pilots went on strike & as we were to come home by Qantas we were pissed about by changing transport so that no arrival date home could be given to families. There was talk of Hercs to Singapore then British Airways to Sydney from there. A rumour also spread that it might be Hercs all the way (God Forbid), eventually we boarded a C141 Starlifter & came to Mascot via Clark Airbase arriving at Mascot, 14/12/66.

At Mascot we had a very short reunion with friends & family before being put on a bus with blacked out windows for the trip to South Head. Families were left to get to South Head their own way & then had to wait patiently while we were processed for leave. Not sure how long that took but it seemed like forever. It was a weird ride in the C141; you sat facing

the rear & only had limited vision out a couple of windows in the back. I'm not sure how many relationships suffered but after our leave when we got back into camp as blokes talked as blokes do it appears that a lot of girlfriends got blamed for giving their returning heroes the crabs, but they must have come from the C141 as there were quite a few cases. Well Paul, that's it as I remember it, no doubt others with better memories will be able to fill in some of the gaps. Cheers Spike.

Who were you in the service with: 131 Div. Loc. Bty

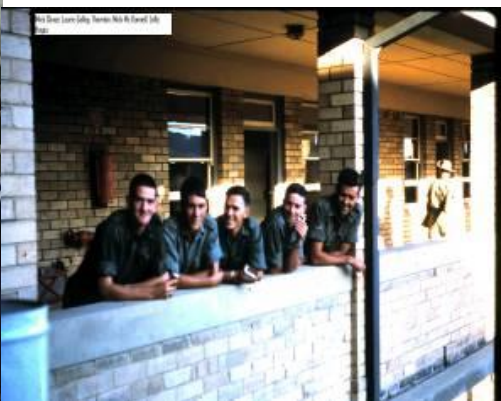
Last Rank: Gunner.

What did you do after the army: A bit of everything - mostly to do with driving then finished up as a concrete plant Manager.

What city / town do you live in now: Nerang Qld.



Self at home



Laurie Gallop, Kevin Thornton, Mick McDonnell & Lofty Hayes

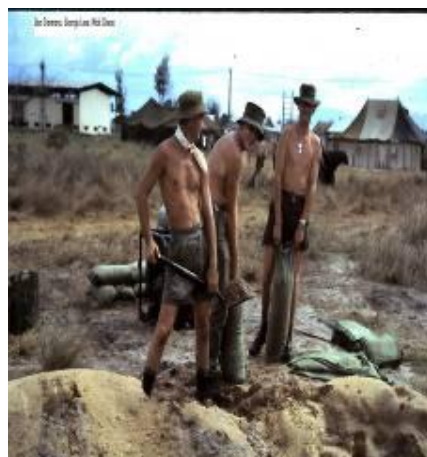


Self and the "Sten"



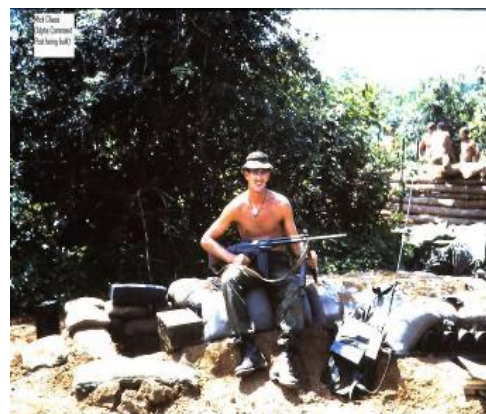
Self, George Lane & Vic Moreau

Don Simmons, George Lane & Self



Mick McDonnell & Self

Self at Alpha Command Post when being built



Bill Taggart (1st/83rd – US Artillery, SVN)- "Paul, please pass along the condolences of the 1/83rd Family to the family, may he rest in peace. Bill."

Wade Cooper – “Lest WE Forget.”

Ernie Newbold –“ G'day Paul,

I am so sorry to hear that "Spike" has lost his final battle, he has been very crook for a long time and his soul is finally at peace. George has lost one of his best mates.

Fortunately George shared his photos with me while he was living in Sydney and so I am able to share them with you now.

Another side note as the nickname “Spike” - George (Lane) told me that he acquired the nickname "Spike" from a sergeant at recruit training who saw him returning from the barber shop after receiving his first army haircut. We all know now that the nickname stuck with him as far as his army mates were concerned for the rest of his life.

Regards, Ernie.” Attachments x 5



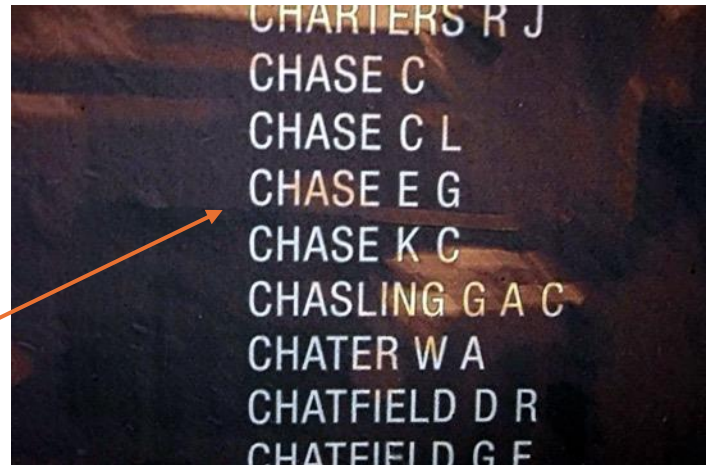
.At left : Shows Gnr Chase on guard at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, Sydney as a part of the Victoria Barracks Guard detail, I believe from what **George Lane** told me that this photo is from the daily newspaper marking the first time National Servicemen performed this guard duty.

At right: Shows a group of locators at the Vietnam memorial in Canberra on 18th August 2016. **Spike** can be seen standing in the second row, between **Allen Morley & Bob Billiards**. **George Lane** is next to **Spike**, between **Ged Carroll & Allen Morley**.



At left: Shows a group of our “**Pioneers**” at a lunch, **Spike** is front centre, between **George Lane & Merv Nairn**.

At right: Shows **Spike's** name on the wall at the Seymour Vietnam Memorial.



At left: Shows a group of pioneers in Vietnam, **Spike** is second from the left.

Ron Mason – “Hi Paul, a snap of **George Lane & Spike Chase** (right) about to head back to Australia. Photo taken at Bravo radar where both had been located for some time.”



Terry Westerway – “I am very sad to hear of Spike's passing - I served with the Battery when Spike was in the unit - I have good memories of Spike. I have found a few photos of Spike which are attached.”



Paul Dickson tthought this photo taken from “Spike's” archives is a classic showinhg him with a bunch of mates as named in the photo...



May He 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 Graeme Dignam:sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join - Memberships are available for 1 year or longer deposit a DONATION direct (add your name) to the associations account at "A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133"

Hope we hear from you?

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

. Other related sites...

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



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

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>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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