

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
2025**

**59 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



Out with the Kids '67



Alpha Radar '68



Op Paddington '67



LP Blokes '67



**SEYMOUR 4th MAY, 2015
– 10 YEARS AGO!**

Seymour Memorial Walk photo collage...



Here's a bit of that memory item...

Seymour Report: A 131 Detachment Story in 2015

Sunday 3rd May at 7.30am was ETD for this group of three ex-Gunners from Sydney. The day was fine and the direction just a bit west of south. Morning tea was enjoyed at the Bakery on the outskirts of Goulburn, New South Wales. We pushed on and just south of Gundagai it became obvious the Victorians knew we were coming.

Allen Morley and Grahame Dignam point out the evidence for the cameraman!



Into Seymour and with no trouble we found our accommodation. The wagons were circled in the motel courtyard, whilst the 131 Pioneers relaxed on the covered walkway, having arrived the day before. This led to introductions all round and names put to new faces. Dinner was at the Royal Hotel where we were fortunate to be assigned a table for 20 plus diners. A great chance to mix and mingle and to attempt to eat the huge meals served.

Monday morning 4th May dawned with clear skies but cool conditions. At least the earlier forecast for rain showers was wrong. The Pioneers crossed the road to Maccas, with Ged Carroll claiming that he had healthy breakfasts there. A recce of the Memorial Walk area enabled the dedication ceremony to be positioned. Then shiny shoes and polished medals saw former detachment members wander in – reminiscent of the quote used in each *Eyes and Ears* by Ed – *Elements of 131 came wandering in from the bush*.

President Allen Morley then welcome those at the gathering:

On behalf of the Committee of 131 Locators Association, welcome all to the Seymour Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk and the dedication of the 131 Div Loc Bty paver. Thank you to everyone here today. Your involvement is important to us. A special thanks to our ladies present. You add a soft touch to the process of ex-gunners swapping war stories on occasions such as this.

May 4th is a special day for the Detachment and this year is the 49th anniversary of the arrival in South Vietnam of what we call the Pioneers. It is also the 48th anniversary of the second group of 131 gunners' departure from Australia to replace the Pioneers.

It is terrific to be able to acknowledge the presence of three former Detachment Commanding Officers today. Namely Brian Kennedy, Warwick Hamilton and Barry Campton. Tim Ford is with us in spirit as Warwick will explain.

A special acknowledgement of the presence of Marianne and Ron Menz representing the late Jimmy Menz, who was known by many in this audience.

Thanks are also due to Ross Gregson Secretary of the Walk Committee who assisted with the Walk arrangements. Without George Lane's insisting – nay nagging – and the planning involvement of Ron Mason we would not be here today. George will perform shortly. Grahame Dignam has put in a huge effort to coordinate the people and travel side of things. To him we owe a significant debt. The design of the paver was by that well known artist, Nick Proskurin who for health reasons could not be here.

Tim Billiards, the son of Bob, one of our 131ers, has come along to be our bugler, to reprise a role from Canberra three years ago. Thanks Tim.

Major Russ Hamsey is present today, providing the nexus between the old 131 and 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment. Thank you for your attendance Russ.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce Lt Colonel (Ret'd) Warwick Hamilton to provide the Dedication address.

Warwick combined his own presentation with that written by Tim Ford (Maj Gen Ret'd) as follows:

DEDICATION CEREMONY SEYMOUR, 4 MAY 2015

MAJ Russ Hamsey, 2IC 20 Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regt

Fellow members of the Detachment 131 Divisional Location Battery, Artillery and RAEME, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to be asked to dedicate the Detachment 'symbol of recognition' at this magnificent and moving Commemorative Walk.

This Walk commemorates and acknowledges ALL 60,000 who played their part in what turned out to be a fairly a fairly tumultuous time in Australia's recent history.

It is hard to believe that *on this date* 49 years ago, *49 years*, the whole of the Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery arrived in South Viet Nam.

We are honoured to recognise our first members, 'The Pioneers' some of whom are here today.

It is perhaps fitting that, while not able to make it in person, we have a note from the Last Officer Commanding, now Major General Tim Ford. Tim rose from Captain Officer Commanding to become a General, so some of you must have had a good influence on him!

He also became the Director of Artillery and the Artillery Representative Colonel Commandant...only in the Army could you have a General as the COLONEL Commandant.

So with your permission ...

Comments by Major General Tim Ford, AO (Retd)

(Previous OC131 Det, D Arty and RAA Representative Commandant)

Please accept my apologies for not being with you today. I wish you a wonderful Commemorative Service and associated activities. The 131 Locators Association Committee has requested me to provide some words for the occasion. I do so with pleasure.

Firstly I congratulate the President and Members of the 131 Locators Association for the wonderful work that they are doing in maintaining the history and heritage of 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA and its service with the Detachment in South Vietnam from 1966-1971. I also commend the close links that they have been established between Locators through the various activities of the Association including through its website and its newsletter "Eyes and Ears". Well done.

It is great to see that, in addition to the Detachment 131 Commemorative Plaque at the Australian War Memorial which was dedicated on 12th May 2012, the 131 Locators Association has now arranged for the Detachment 131 Paver to be included in the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk in Seymour. This paver will most appropriately recognize the service and sacrifice of all Members of 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA.

I remember my service with the Locators with pride, both while at Holsworthy and as the last Officer Commanding the Detachment at Nui Dat from August 1970 to August 1971. Locators always add a special dimension to the Gunnery equation. They served with great distinction in South Vietnam as part of the 1st Australian Task Force for over 6 years providing very professional artillery intelligence and listening posts, mortar locating radar, sound ranging, artillery survey, sensor and workshop support. All Locators, Gunners and Veterans can be most proud of their achievements. I am pleased to see that the paver being dedicated today is based on the original 131 Detachment plaque, designed I believe by "Chalky" Royal and Warwick Hamilton in 1967. The Chinese "Lung" Dragon, symbolizes the great virtues of the Locators, and the Atom, represents the many activities of the Locators rotating around the artillery core. It is a most appropriate paver design to commemorate the fine service of so many regular and national servicemen with the Detachment.

I continued to follow the fate of the Locators throughout my 40 years in the ADF and afterwards as RAA Representative Colonel Commandant for 7 years. I noted how they were always able to "move with the times". They continue to this day to provide critical information to the offensive fire support capability of the Australian Army and the ADF. Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery, RAA and its members served the nation with dedication during the Vietnam War. It is most fitting that a Paver for the Detachment be included in this Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Walk. Lest We Forget!

Warwick continued:

While I am not sure about Tim's attribution of our plaque design I must second his sentiments, particularly the recognition of the great work by the President and members of the association.

Today we stand by this wall where names are individually shown in alphabetic order, not by unit. We are laying a paver dedicated to a unit, the Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery. This will symbolically recognise and link the individuals shown on the wall and the unit. This represents more than 500 Artillerymen, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and others who served in the detachment from April 1966 to August 1971.

We need to link the individuals and the Unit as we were different – some might say VERY different – in that while other units rotated as a whole entity about every 12 months, we rotated people, individuals, while our unit name remained operational in country.

The unit was in fact an individual too. It was more individual than most in that we were an independent unit (though some senior officers had difficulty with that), with individual sub units and survey detachments spread far and wide.

Additionally, because we operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, usually in another unit's locality, a lot of responsibility was placed on individuals... all of whom rose to the occasion.

I have used 'individual' a lot, though I do suspect that after hearing a radio call finish with "Man other means, out" a more collective discussion was about to take place!

This unit and personnel individuality was certainly recognised by others. Senior officers often remarked that "your soldiers don't understand discipline – they act like individuals", to which the answer was 'YES SIR' while standing rigidly to attention: or a little less threatening was a US artillery officer who asked "Say, is it true that a Listening Post commander is equivalent to a US Army Second Lieutenant?", the answer to which was "errr, well sort of".

So I feel that it is really important that we have this paver, as it draws together the individual "members" shown on the wall into a symbolic recognition of their service to an individual "unit", the Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery.

I am honoured to dedicate this paver to our unit. Thank you.

Warwick received a standing ovation, which was not too surprising since everyone was already standing.



Another Memory
- 8th May 1945 -
VE Day
Victory in Europe Day -
80th Anniversary!



Australians in the Battle of Coral–Balmoral

12 May to 6 June 1968 - 57 Years Ago

As dusk descended over Fire Support Base Coral on the evening of 12 May 1968, some soldiers felt uneasy. They later recalled a sense of foreboding.

During the day, two Australian infantry battalions, three artillery batteries and support units had moved in to establish the base in an area of operations known to the Americans as “the catcher’s mitt”, 45 kilometres north of Saigon and 60 kilometres north-west of the Australian task force base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province. For the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF), this amounted to a leap into the unknown.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P01766.002

Soldiers of 131 Divisional Locating Battery, waiting for helicopter transport to FSB Coral on 12 May 1968. AWM P01766.002

Members of 131 Divisional Locating Battery on 12 May 1968, waiting with their full kit to be taken by air to Fire Support Base (FSB) Coral, which was just being established in Bien Hoa Province. Like many Australian units, their move to the new base was delayed. The 5 soldiers on the left of the picture are (left to right): 1411285 Gunner (Gnr) Walter George 'Wally' Franklin; 2787174 Gnr Kenneth John 'Bluey' Peisley; 54941 Bombardier Neville Charles 'Nev' Wortlehook; 3791355 Gnr John Victor Dellaca; 421326 Gnr Ian Donald Kennedy. The identity of the other soldiers is not known. That night and the following day, FSB Coral would come under heavy attack from a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) battalion, marking the start of the Battle of Coral-Balmoral. AWM P01766.002

. Graham Dignam forwarded a link to the following article which appeared in the latest issue of contact 'Contact'...Gunnery test new eyes in the sky



Gunner Jake McKean and Gunner Fergus Eastaugh assess the trailer-mounted UAV recovery system during Exercise Chimera Walk at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Queensland. Story and photos by Captain Tadek Markowski.

The 20th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, launched, flew and recovered their newest uncrewed aerial vehicle (UAV), the Integrator, in round-the-clock operations.

It was the first time the Brisbane-based regiment's three flying batteries (131, 132 and 133), Combat Service Support (CSS) Battery and Operational Support Battery had field-tested the new aircraft. Live flight trials at the Army Aviation Training Centre, Oakey, and hours of simulator flight training preceded the regiment's first 'shake-out' exercise of the year, which focused on getting experience with the Integrator's systems, flight characteristics and support equipment.

Warrant Officer Class Two (WO2) Marc Plant, of Army's Aviation Command, said the two-week exercise was important "hands-on" training.

"It's an opportunity to build familiarity with the equipment as well as applying a tactical scenario to support how the Integrator is used with the protected mobility vehicles [PMVs]," WO2 Plant said.

"20th Regiment has two UAS capability bricks, each comprising three aircraft, a trailer-mounted launcher and 'skyhook' recovery system, with Bushmaster PMVs used as ground control platforms."

By the end of the year, the unit is expected to take delivery of additional Integrators, enabling two capability bricks per flying battery.

The Integrators are being delivered by Insitu Pacific Ltd, and are being assembled at a Brisbane factory using several components designed and built in Australia, including an advanced camera gimbal.

The UAS form part of Project DEF 129, designed to enhance situational awareness and increase force protection across maritime and land military operations.

Launched via catapult and caught using a vertical arrest cable, the Integrator and its support systems are readily deployable by road, air and sea – an essential requirement for supporting Army's littoral-manoeuvre fighting force.

With its day/night cameras and potential for modular payload sensor suites, it provides Defence with enhanced intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance capabilities.

Intelligence gathered during Integrator missions can be shared with land and maritime strike capabilities, including Army's new long-range artillery and rocket systems.

20th Regiment UAS operator, Gunner Jake McKean, said lessons from modern conflicts demonstrated why drone technology and capability was becoming one of the fastest growing areas within Defence.

"It's an evolving capability, so it's at the forefront of technology in the Australian Army," Gunner McKean said.

"We're a really valuable asset to the entire Defence Force. We are the first eyes on target."



The ADF's Tactical Uncrewed Aerial Systems (TUAS) program came into sharp focus during Exercise Chimera Walk at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area recently.

Soldiers from 20th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, prepare an Integrator Tactical Uncrewed Aerial System (TUAS) for launch at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area during Exercise Chimera Walk.

Ed - I had to smile at the mention in the article above taken from 'Contact' that 120th was up at **Shoalwater Bay!** It was on Exercise "Barra Winga" at Shoalwater Bay October, 1966 that I did justice to a cake my mum sent me for my 21st birthday. The couple of photos shows me cutting Bob Bruce a slice and my being looked after by an M113 APC.

I'm amazed Shoalwater Bay still exists after 59 years of pounding!

PS - the long train journey up there and Land Rover trip back were memorable for the wrong reasons!





Royal Australian Nursing Corp

- Your services will always be Acknowledged and Remembered.

VIETNAM NURSES MEMORIAL – MORVEN, QUEENSLAND HISTORICAL MUSEUM...OPENS



More than half a century after the end of the Vietnam War, in which 52,000 Australian men served our nation, the Vietnam Nurses Memorial has been opened at the Morven Historical Museum in Morven, southwest Queensland. The permanent photographic exposition is the first Memorial in Australia dedicated solely to the 353 Australian women who nursed in Vietnam between 1964-1972.

The sixteen compelling images share stories of RAAF, Army and Civilian Surgical Team nurses, at work during the war. Some of the images in the were sourced from the Australian War Memorial, some from nurses and some were generously donated by the family of renowned War Photographer, the late Denis Stanley Gibbons.

These photographs capture glimpses of the Australian nurses' experience in Vietnam, and ensure their stories have a permanent home in Australian history.

The Vietnam Nurses Memorial located within the Morven Historical Museum complex, is open to visitors every day between 10am and 4pm.

NB: Morven is about 655km north west of Brisbane, between Blackall and Cunnamulla.



Give me a Name?

The “Lost Locator Project”

This Project is being re-ignited for 2025.

Our current list contains the names of **80** Locators (as at 31.05.2025) 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. **Our Register of Lost Locators had 95 names registered in late last year and our Honour Roll has very sadly increased from 138 in June 2024.**

Let's have a look at **JUNE's Birthday List**, below, where there are 4 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	Geoffrey David Sullivan	3798292	1949	02 12 1970	03 05 1971	Melbourne, Vic 131
	" "			03 05 1971	20 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
10	Keith Edward White	2783029	1945	17 04 1967	13 12 1967	Belmore, NSW AACC
15	Edward John Webb T/Bdr	29964	1941	27 01 1970	21 01 1971	Braidwood, NSW
26	Lindsay Maxwell Mead T/Bdr	3790714	1945	27 03 1968	26 04 1968	Benalla, Vic

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

Paul Dickson

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

. Unknown/Known Dates of Deaths continues to be updated...as at 31.05.2025 –

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 **Leslie Paul Smith-Lester, Terence William McManis and Neville Angus Smith (25 05 2025)** to the list below as they recently passed. (See Vale below)

<u>10 Year Detachment/131 Battery Death Periods</u>										<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	1	2	0	2	8
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	
1	4	4	4	2	9	5	6	5	4	44
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
8	4	5	5	6	8	10	10	11	5	72
Unknowns*										1
Total										159

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 **30.04.2025**.

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

This following sections have now been updated as of 31.01.2025 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 YOU give some thought to completing YOUR Locator Profile, which do add a personal background and also keeping in touch as it keeps us up to date with you and mates.

Ok, detectives, here's more homework – still one more to find!

...continuing investigations –



131 Locators
“Cold Case Division”
The Eyes & Ears of the Force

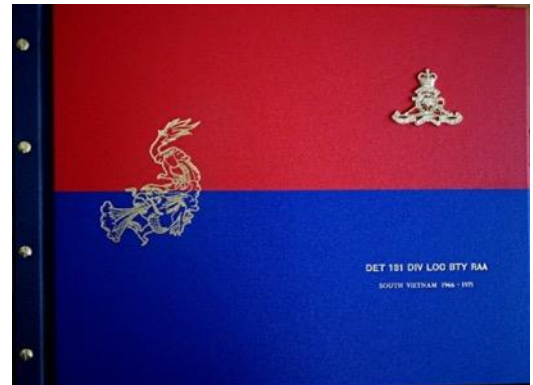
Peter Meaney, Chief Inspector – Through thorough searching discovered the Funeral Notice for **Leslie Paul Smith-Lester** and matching records (mention of serving with "131 in Vietnam" and the quoting of his Regimental Number by the RSL representative) from information spoken of in the streamed funeral service was able to confirm Leslie's relationship with the Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA.

Plus Peter also found a Cemetery Location in the Centennial Park Cemetery, Pasadena, Mitcham City, South Australia for **Terence William McManis**, who passed 20th December, 2024.

Paul and Terry are sadly listed in Vale below..

May They Rest in Peace and Never be Forgotten

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



. Insights and Recollections...

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

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

Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

Peter Ravelje - submits another interesting, and to me (Ed) somewhat confusing, read...

Stop using our RSL brand to ‘khaki wash’ your pokie cash says veterans chief

Matthew Benns, Daily Telegraph April 23, 2025 -

An Anzac Day civil war has broken out with veteran support organisation RSL NSW accusing licensed RSL clubs of slashing funding for returned Diggers and calling for clubs to stop using the RSL brand.

The licensed RSL clubs have hit back, saying they give millions of dollars to other veteran charities.

RSL, Diggers and Memorial clubs made almost \$1 billion in profit last year but passed on just \$326,000 through the official ClubGrants website to veteran welfare programs run by the real RSL.

RSL NSW President and former commando Mick Bainbridge said funding had been cut by more than three quarters after he first called for clubs to stop “khaki washing” pokie profits by using the RSL brand last year.

“Imagine what we could do if we received a fair share of that grant funding from those clubs that are trading very well on our brand,” Mr Bainbridge said.

NSW RSL President Mick Bainbridge said funding had been cut by more than three quarters after he first called for clubs to stop “khaki washing” pokie profits by using the RSL brand last year. Picture: Thomas Lisson

In 2024 donations from RSL branded clubs dropped by more than 75 per cent from the \$1.4 million donated the year before.

“I don’t know if they have cut funding in response to my criticism but they are either tone deaf or not accepting the issues we have here,” Mr Bainbridge said.

RSL NSW, the not for profit veteran support organisation Returned and Services League of Australia, split from licensed clubs in the 1970s when liquor laws were reformed.

Former veterans affairs minister David Elliott, who put RSL NSW through a judicial inquiry into its funding, said many RSL sub branches continued to work well with licensed clubs and were well funded.

"The clubs are giving their money to groups like Soldier On who stepped in to support veterans when RSL NSW failed," he said.

"The only person who wants to end the association with clubs is Mr Bainbridge. What happens to the memorabilia and the nightly ode? Who will pay for Anzac Day services?

"One minute he is calling for more money from clubs and the next he wants to cut ties altogether," Mr Elliott said.

Mr Elliott, a veteran, is on the board of Castle Hill RSL club and an active member of the RSL sub branch. He said the majority of club directors have to be veterans to ensure "the people handing out the grants our veterans themselves".

A breakdown of the \$326,000 in donations listed under the ClubGrants scheme showed that not all of the money classified as veteran support services actually went to RSL sub branches and veteran support.

Donations included \$32,000 from Penrith RSL to the clubs' own advocacy group the RSL and Services Clubs Association and \$50,000 from Chester Hill RSL Club to the Lismore City Bowling Club.

Chester Hill RSL club chief executive David Love said the donation had been incorrectly categorised but that almost \$500,000 had been given to local veteran charities not listed with RSL NSW.

"We have two veterans on our board and see supporting veterans as one of our core objectives," he said. "But not everything we give gets listed on the ClubGrants site."

The NSW government is conducting a review into the effectiveness of the ClubGrants scheme. A spokesman for Racing and Gaming Minister David Harris said a number of submissions had been received including from RSL NSW and a response would follow "in due course".

Veteran Casey "Ginger" Carr and her partner Matthew "Rusty" Carr have become RSL NSW Wellbeing Support Officers after struggling with homelessness when they left the defence force.

"We did not fully understand the difference between the RSL club here in Yass and the RSL sub branch until we joined," Ginger said. "If clubs are carrying a name that links them to the RSL and are profiting from the name then they should be giving more to support veterans."

RSL and Services Clubs Association president Margot Smith said she was "disappointed" RSL NSW was pushing to end the association "when clubs have proudly upheld the RSL tradition for many decades".

"We have repeatedly sought, and continue to do so, constructive dialogue with RSL NSW to seek better outcomes for veterans and their families in NSW," she said. "Importantly, it is not the remit of RSL and Services Clubs to deliver frontline veterans welfare services across the state. That is the role of RSL NSW."

On Wednesday, Deputy Premier Prue Car urged RSL NSW and RSL clubs to cool their dispute as Anzac Day approaches.

"This is a matter that really is best left between RSL NSW and particular registered clubs," she said.

"I would just urge people to remember it's days away from Anzac Day and for a lot of people who have returned from armed conflict from overseas or those who are remembering family members that this can be quite a difficult time."

Ed - I have never belonged to an RSL, or for that matter a Sub Branch, so the content of this article is totally confusing to me - maybe call it ignorance.

I know that some of you belong to Sub Branches and, again, some of you are deeply involved in one way or another. Perhaps, if you're inclined or interested, you could add some clarification as to your knowledge or understanding, maybe based on how your Sub Branch benefits from this 'system'?

A thought from me would be - Why don't these establishments (RSL / Sub Branches) support Veteran concerns rather than trying to be a benefactor to the wider sphere?

Mail Call...

Peter Ravelje - "G'day Paul,

Finally, after applying on the 7th Aug. 2024, DVA have accepted my Psych's diagnosis of my PTSD and my RVCM arrived in the mail on Mon. 26 May'25.

I am very pleased with this outcome. I now feel complete having the full set of Nasho gongs!

I've also emailed **Richard Barry** for his tireless work over many years to achieve this for us, who thru no fault of our own, were sent home early. I still had 6 weeks to serve before discharge and would have preferred to have done that at the 'Dat'....Not Watsonia Barracks where I was sent to do do menial jobs and emu bobbing the grounds of that establishment.

Regards

Peter Ravelje.

'UBIQUE'."

Ed - That is great news and the work of Richard Barry is to be commended.



Mail Out ➡ **Ed** - I started this section in September, 2017 and have continued to write to Locators based on a year quarterly basis, by breaking down the names alphabetically into groups of one third of the then available list. The list has diminished over time, but, in general, there is a good core of blokes who communicate regularly 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.

Total Mail Out Members = 222 & Total Quarterly "Catch Up" Member Responders = 55

Mail In ← - Here are the responses...

John Bayford - 'All good with us Paul. Golf is ruling our lives at the moment. Good to hear from you and that you are still travelling extensively. Cheers John.'

Warwick Brooker - "You and Helen lead an exciting life, Dicko, from world tours to animal sterilisations! There's nothing as exciting in our lives, but I did get up to **Bathurst to commemorate ANZAC Day** with **Irvy and Kanga**. Apart from that, life has been pretty humdrum, apart from looking after our 4yo grandson two or three days a week. The Labor Party managed to lie its way through another federal election and is now in charge for another three years after a landslide victory. Maybe that's a reasonable outcome, as they'll be responsible for dealing with whatever your northern neighbour comes up with. We're well thanks, apart from the ageing process. All the best to you and Helen. Warwick."

...Warwick responds to a question re: ANZAC Day...

"Hi again Paul.

We attended the Dawn Service at Bathurst at 4:30am, which was followed by a Gunfire Breakfast at the RSL Club. We then headed to Yetholme for the 8:30am service, which was followed by tea/coffee and ANZAC biscuits in the Yetholme Memorial Hall.

Then, it was back to Bathurst for the 10:30am service, which was followed by lunch at the RSL Club. The attached pic shows us lining up for that service.

Cheers
Warwick."



Nick Armstrong - "Hello Paul.

Thank you for your recent email, and an apology for my slow response. Robin and I were part way through a road trip to Tasmania when I received it.

We have a son and his wife living in Launceston, which gives us one of several reasons to visit. We have visited Tasmania four times since they settled there. We have visited most areas accessible by road, but the Southwest is not on my 'To do' list. I doubt if I would have been willing to walk that area even when I was still in the Army, and not as an 81-year-old!

The road journey from Port Lincoln to Geelong was done in two easy stages, with an overnight stop in Renmark. From Renmark, we travelled south to Naracoorte, east through Hamilton to Geelong, which is now the ferry terminal.

South Australia is now very dry, with the drought becoming very noticeable.

The ferry trip was very comfortable, but being overnight, mostly while asleep. We spent a couple of nights with our son and daughter in law, before travelling to Strahan, via Miena at the southern end of Great Lake.

While in Strahan, we travelled on the 'World Heritage Cruise' boat on Macquarie Harbour. The six-hour cruise included the entrance of Macquarie Harbour to the Southern Ocean; a one hour stop at Sarah Island, a penal colony for eleven years in the mid 1800's; and a journey into the lower reaches of the Gordon River.

Following two nights at Strahan, we travelled north to Corinna on the Pieman River, where we stopped for another two nights. The Corinna stop allowed us time to cruise down the Pieman River to the outfall into the Southern Ocean. Being near the end of the tourist season, our group numbered six with two crew members, having a very relaxed party of eight! The cruise boat, Arcadia 2, had an interesting life. It was built in Hobart in 1938, as a luxury cruise boat on the Derwent River. During WW11, the Navy requested the Arcadia 11 to work on the Derwent River and subsequently worked around Papua/New Guinea. Eventually, after WW11, the Navy disposed of the boat, and it spent a period scallop fishing in the Coles Bay region of the east coast of Tasmania. In 1961, the Arcadia 11 relocated to the Macquarie Harbour, operating as a cruise boat once again. In 1970 the boat moved north to the Pieman River, as a cruise boat operating between Corinna and the mouth of the Pieman River. The Arcadia 11 claims to be the last remaining Huon Pine hull, river cruiser, operating anywhere in the world. It is registered with [Australian Register of Historic Vessels](#). During the recent

bushfires which burnt through an extensive area around Rosebery, Zeehan, and Corinna, The Arcadia 11 received priority fire protection.

Our journey travelled northwards, stopping for a night at Stanley, then a night at Launceston, then on the ferry overnight to Geelong. The journey back to Port Lincoln ended two weeks after departure. The total road distance was about 4000km, with no computer-generated fault lights with the 14-year-old Landrover Discovery 4. The only damage was between Renmark and Naracoorte, where a stray rock punched a hole through the plastic lens of a headlight. All the light globes continued to function, so some duct tape covered the hole until I returned home.

The local 'Landrover Man' suggested a new headlight would cost about \$1000! It seems the clear lenses can be purchased as an aftermarket item. He is waiting for a delivery of some, when he will experiment repairing an old headlight. Clear 'Gorilla' adhesive tape will have to do for now. Now I have a damaged headlight, it may begin to rain!! ANZAC Day for me was a dawn service in Port Lincoln, and a very low-key march in Arno Bay. The Port Lincoln Dawn Service seemed very well attended as usual.

My reason for attending the Arno Bay march was in support of one of my 13-year-old granddaughters performing in a small choir. They performed the ANZAC themed version of 'We are Australian'. I suggested she may wish to wear her Great Grandfather's WW1 campaign medals. She agreed, so I suggested her twin sister might also like to march. I am unsure of the protocol of how many descendants can march wearing the same group of medals. There were about 25 marchers total, with half being members of the local Country Fire Service Brigade. The rest of the group were mostly descendants of returned service personnel.



Arno Bay Choir



Arno Bay march.

Pinning great grandfather's medals on Caitlin



At left - Estelle, Self and Caitlin



The Last Post and Reveille were played by a local musician playing a harmonica. The solemn nature of the ceremony was in no way diminished by the size and informality of the day.

It is sad to note the number of deaths among our numbers, but I guess it is a sign of things to come. I became an 81-year-old while in Tasmania. I do not celebrate passing events. I have never seen much point in celebrating what has past, but consider today is the first day of the future.

It must be a strange position having US, Canadian and Mexican friends living in Mexico now. Living in Australia, we are kept abreast of international political

matters. For me, it seems like we are living in parallel universes, with normality alongside some weird 'Reality' television show continually interrupting normal life. I have never understood what is real about 'Reality TV'.

Cheers and best wishes to everyone from Nick."

Ps - "I have received the photographs taken by my daughter during the Arno Bay ANZAC Day morning march. It was a somewhat lower key march than Sydney or Brisbane, but no less important.

I think the file titles are self-explanatory."

Self, Caitlin and Estelle in the march.



Hilton Holloway - "Hi Paul

Firstly, my apologies for not getting you any photos of ANZAC Day at Villers-Bretonneux for the last edition.

Attached is a write-up of our tour to the Western Front for the next 'Eyes and Ears' if you think it is appropriate for the newsletter. (WORD and PDF versions)

Thank you for the great work you and the committee do. Keeping memories alive is very important, as the people who were on our tour have also come to understand.

Cheers

Hilton."

ANZAC Day Tour 2025 - Western Front

18 of us met in Lille, starting the tour with a group dinner on the evening of 17 April. The next day, the first main stop was Fromelles. Phil, an Australian resident in France and the tour co-leader, gave a running commentary as we travelled along. At the various stops, Adam (my son and tour organiser) explained how the battles unfolded, weaving the story around one or more of the tour guests relatives who fought there. A bit of fossicking in plowed ground on the battlefield yielded quite a few pieces including a belt buckle. Later in the tour a couple of rusted bayonets and the nose cone of a shell were found. Amazing that this stuff is still there over 100 years on.

After stopping at the Cobbers Memorial and the Australian Memorial Park we headed to a nearby pub for lunch and a Belgian beer. Then onto Messines and Hill 60. We stayed in Ypres for the next two nights.

Next day, a stop at the Black Watch Memorial was followed by a walk through Polygon Wood to the 5th Australian Division Memorial. Lunch was at De Dreve restaurant. The owner was instrumental in organising and funding the construction of the adjacent Brothers-in-Arms Memorial, an amazing and very moving structure. There was a visit to Tyne Cot, after which we walked the ground where Henry 'Chick' Holloway was awarded the Military Medal for saving the lives of four men.



We attended the Menin Gate ceremony that evening where Adam was very honoured to be asked to read the Ode of Remembrance. He and I laid a wreath as one of our relatives, Edwin Holloway, has his name inscribed on the Gate.

First thing, on the bus, next day (20th) was singing happy birthday to Adam. Heading back into France near Haezebrouck we heard more stories of our group's

stopping at significant locations along the lunch, we had a photo stop at the massive National Memorial at Vimy and a walk the nearby preserved trenches. Continuing we spent some time at the Notre-Dame-De-France's largest [military cemetery](#), and the L'Anneau de la Mémoire ("The Ring of

A bright sunny day greeted us as we headed Albert, stopped at Lochnagar Crater, and what was to be one of the most emotional of the tour - Quarry Railway Siding. This was location for an Advanced Dressing Station of Field Ambulance. Two of our tour guests,

never met before the tour, had a relative here at the same time. One of the 13th Field Ambulance, the other a wounded soldier brought in. The wounded soldier died and his grave is in Quarry Cemetery. His relative was asked by Adam to



relatives, way. After Canadian through onto Arras Lorette, adjacent Memory"). off to then, to moments the the 13th who had

read out the poem, "The Day My Family Came" by Michael Edwards. Brian did a great job and managed it - although, understandably, with some difficulty. There wasn't a dry eye in the group.

Next stop was the Windmill site near Pozieres, then to Le Tommy cafe for lunch. I had been here in 2012 when, with my wife Carol. The cafe has been given a makeover since, as has the military figure outside the front door.

It's a short walk from there to the 1st Australian Division Memorial. The path to the memorial goes past what is left of the old German blockhouse known then as 'Gibraltar'. Several of my relatives walked past this point after its capture. My grandfather was wounded during the first Australian attack on Pozieres on 23 July 1916. So this place has some significance for my family. Our tour group then walked down a track past the 'Chalk Pit', then by bus to Thiepval. Bullecourt was our destination the next day. First stop was on a small track going through the fields east of



Bullecourt, where Adam described how the first and second battles unfolded. A local farmer pulled up in his little station wagon with a load of unexploded artillery shells and shell casings. We happened to be standing next to a drop-off point for this stuff. About 900 tons of unexploded ordnance is recovered each year and people are still being



killed. I admit I was pretty nervous until we moved on.

On the way into Bullecourt we stopped at the Bullecourt Diggers Memorial where a contingent of Australian military personnel were practising for the Anzac Day service. Adam and Phil were interviewed by a regional newspaper journalist and the article appeared in the paper two days later. Bullecourt was adorned with Australian flags and Anzac posters. Many houses also had Aussie flags. Right across this part of France, Australia is still remembered for the sacrifice our soldiers and our country made. After lunch at Le Canberra, the local pub, we walked around the corner to the Bullecourt 1917, Jean and Denise Letaille museum. It is small but well worth the visit. The Curator, Alexandre Blondel, presented Adam with a bottle of Digger's beer, and Adam presented Alexandre and his assistant, Harmonie, special tour medallions. That evening in Arras, our group went



to a wine tasting and information session.



Next morning, the 23rd, on our way to Villers-Bretonneux, we stopped at Heilly Station Cemetery, where a relative of one of the group is buried. A Roma boy, who was very close friends with some of my relatives, is also there. Adam placed a photograph on his headstone. A quick stop at the nearby 3rd Australian Division Memorial, then to the Victoria School in VB. Unfortunately there were no children in school that day but the museum and gift shop were open. Then a short drive to the Australian National Memorial and the Sir John Monash Centre. We spent some time going through the interpretive displays. After lunch there, we headed off to Le Hamel and visited the Australian Corps Memorial Park. Again, two of our tour guests, who had never met before the tour, had a relative here at the same time. On the way to Bray-sur-Somme, we stopped in

a field and Adam told the story of my grandfather's second wounding. He was behind the lines at Turk Dump when he was blown up by the "last shell of the night" - 25th February 1917. We are standing on the very spot.



The first stop on the 24th was Hem Farm Military Cemetery to hear a very moving story of one of tour guests relative. The cemetery sits on the edge of a beautiful village on the banks of the Somme. Next stop was the 2nd Australian Division Memorial, the only one of the five that does not have a plinth but a statue of a digger. Then to the Museum of the Great War in Peronne. After lunch, we made a stop at the 4th Australian Division Memorial, thus visiting all five Divisional memorials. It has a commanding view over the countryside but the access is by a rough dirt track so it doesn't see many visitors. Final stop for the day was the Saint-Quentin canal, built in the early 1800's on orders of Napoleon.

Anzac day 2025, a 2:30am start on a very cold but fine morning. There were just around we under 2,000 people at VB this year. The speeches were mainly built telling the Anzac story of a relative or a particular soldier. After the service, we headed off to Naours Caves for breakfast and a tour of the caves.

Thousands of Allied servicemen have inscribed their names on the walls.



them was my great-uncle Henry Holloway MM and Bar. I had photo of his inscription but now I chance to discover it in person. guide, Alice, gave me a flashlight found the inscription almost immediately. I think I was 'strategically placed' beforehand. be standing in your relatives from over 100 years ago is awesome. Henry's story, and close friend John Castree, are in the Caves museum. This was the last day of our tour last optional stop was to attend the



were just around we

One of 'Chick' seen a got the Our and I

Again, to footsteps

that of his also told

and one afternoon our group



Anzac Day service at Bullecourt. About half made the short drive from our hotel. Although there was a large involvement of ADF people, the service was very much a local affair. The MC was Alexandre Blondel. He presented in both French and flawless English. The first part of the service was held in the town centre. One of the highlights was a group of young school children singing the anthems of Great Britain, Australia and France. On their sweaters were the Australian flag, the words "ANZAC Day", and a red poppy. After the laying of the wreaths at the monument outside the town hall we all walked to the Bullecourt Diggers Memorial for the Last Post ceremony.

Back at the hotel that evening we had a tour farewell dinner. Guests were presented with the A3 photos and maps that Adam had produced to tell their relatives stories, a tour medallion, and a certificate.

It was a wonderful eight days. You not only got to go where your own relatives have been but also share the stories of others on the tour. And on top of all that I was with my son Adam.

The next day, seven of us headed off to Bayeaux for the optional five day Normandy Tour - but that is another story.

Hilton Holloway, May 2025



Phil Connor - "Giddyday, Paul how are you and Helen?

Sorry I am unable to put a piece together as my brother in law just passed away down in Syd and I have a bit on my plate. Miriam and I are travelling down and staying/arranging things with the family. The family and (Miriam's sister) want us to stay.

Dodododo, I am now the last brother in law out of 4.

Cheers

Phil and Miriam."

Graham Williams - "Hey Paul,

Back to harass you once more. The attached pics were taken last month in Vung Tau. They have dug up the entire back beach beachfront for some 3 kms for beautification???? These pics taken in front of the Imperial Hotel area so pretty much what we are looking at here is the area where the Harold Holt Pool once graced 1 ALSG.

The Imperial Hotel had a beautiful pool area on this site but they dug it up anyway. Govt just take what they want. Big changes in Vietnam coming quickly now with new metro opened in HCM and new International airport not far from opening not far from Phu My (could be Long Khanh or Long Thanh.) I believe Tan Son Nhut will then be domestic flights only.

Cheers,
G.W."



Michael Butler - "Hi Paul

Thanks for your note.

Have been doing the usual - took the caravan down to Warrnambool to see my son and family in early April. Going again later this month for a family get together so we are taking extra warm clothing as the temperature has suddenly dropped - minus one tonight in Blackburn !!!

Went to the dawn service at the local Box Hill RSL on ANZAC Day but didn't go into the City to march - just had a sausage sizzle at home with the family at lunch time. Not sure where our banner has gone that we used to march behind in Melbourne but our unit was not listed on the order of march as it usually did so maybe age again is taking its toll.

Have enjoyed a couple social events at Box Hill VVAA but numbers are starting to dwindle as we all get older. Which has prompted me to get somebody in to do the heavy work in the garden - takes the pressure off !!

Take care.

Mike."

ED - an extract from my response to Mike..."The "aging" subject is getting more common reflected with our Honour Roll growing.

ANZAC Day attendances was a subject raised at the last Association ZOOM meeting where it's common place where major cities - Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne are noting a major drop in numbers. It was realised that more members are staying local to take part in ceremonies with families and mates.

However, it's great and heartwarming to keep this "Catching up to say g'day" quarterly mail section alive - hopefully tapping a few keys to keep in touch continues...Paul."

Steve Wynn - "G'day mate, How are things going over there, I hope you didn't slip with the razor, no wonder they call animals dumb, fancy letting you near them with a razor.

It has rained every day since a week before Easter, except for 2 days only, I am growing webbed feet walking around in the soggy ground. Just started pouring again, bugger. My mate brought me 3 truckloads of rounds (firewood) but it is too wet to get another mate in, who splits the wood for me, so all the wood is piled up at the end of the driveway and soaking wet now, I will have to borrow my wife's hair drier to blow on the wood, or it won't burn. Yeah sure.

Only a year ago I was doing 50 push ups every morning, walking between 3-6kms every day, even jogging, now I can't do any of it, this getting older is for the birds. I looked everywhere for that damn fountain of youth but I don't think it exists, so don't waste your time looking.

I haven't made a move yet to contact the RSL at Port. I have been busy with doctors and getting my second eye implanted Tuesday, having issues with the second one which we are attempting to sort out today, but it may require another hurried visit to the ophthalmologist, fingers crossed that won't be needed. An issue now is I use a transport company for all my out of town appointments, and they require notice for any trips, naturally, so I can't just whip into the next town to see specialists in a hurry anymore.

I was almost blind for just on 3 months which was giving me damned awful migraine headaches, trying to see anything, which would put me in bed for the day. The problem was my long distance vision was fantastic but couldn't see anything in front of me, and that meant no ability to get a focus on anything, that is the only problem I can 'see' with mono vision, pardon the pun.

I can see everything clearly now, incredibly so in fact, but glare from lights, monitor, TV and especially outside still blinds me so wearing sun glasses all the time, for a week, trying to look 'cool' ha, ha.

For some reason I am not allowed to drive for 2 weeks, do any work etc etc of course my wife doesn't believe me but that is Ophthalmologist's instructions. Last time it was only one week, private hospital is one week, public hospital is two weeks???

Now the bloody system does not supply paper prescriptions, they email a scan to my phone for the chemist, so since I have finger print recognition setup on my phone, I have to take my phone to the chemist to get a script, usually my wife gets the hard copy scripts for me. She had to drive me into town for the chemist this morning, that went down well, 'cause I am a terrible 'back seat driver', even though I am in the front seat. I suppose it might replace cutting a tree down for my one piece of paper, what a con, this is all so gov'n's know everything about everyone, and can use it for leverage to get compliance, like when Trudeau stopped the bank accounts of truckies protesting. I might have to invent my own digital currency, maybe call it Bitcoin?

Take care you two and keep safe. Steve Wynn."

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

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>

SALUTE

Official Journal of the Totally and Permanently
Incapacitated Veterans' Association of New South Wales Limited
Winter 2024

Ernie Newbold forwarded in the following link – copy paste and read June's edition -

The link below will take you to the TPI NSW's latest Newsletter – It's a worthwhile read as it contains information from DVA and some great stories...

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=55f192afee&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg-f:1802742395713089188&th=1904a0a85603eea4&view=att&disp=safe>



Committee Members:

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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

The east coast of Australia during May experienced extremely heavy rainfall, especially along the New South Wales coast. Parts of the north coast and inland saw rainfall totals of between 400 and 650 mm. And, at the end of May, Sydney's Warragamba Dam overflowed after water inputs pushed the capacity from 96%. Back in the early 2000s so-called expert Tim Flannery said that the dam only had two years of water and would never fill again. In the meantime, overflows have occurred on several occasions. That inconsistency will be of little relief to the owners of the 10,000 properties impacted by the May floods throughout NSW. The loss of stock, property water damage and battle with insurers make for a sad situation for those affected. Then a senior politician ascribes the cause to climate change, at the same time roping in more cyclones (wrong) and drought (wrong) as causal factors from climate change. Indeed in Dorothea Mackellar's early 20th century 'My Country', she emphasised in that famous poem "Of droughts and flooding rains", describing Australia's climate. Not much change there.

Allen

59 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 13th May 2025

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

Attendees were:

Ged Carroll, Ian Amos, Nick Proskurin,

Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam,

ZOOM attendees: Paul Dickson, Bob Billiards

Terry Erbs, Barry Guzder, Iain Kennedy



Apologies: George Lane, Jim Fitzgerald, Steve Wynn, Gordon Malcolm, Ernest Newbold, Merv Nairn, Warwick Brooker and other State Reps

Financial Membership is currently ...118, plus Associates 2, Affiliates 15. Total 145. Lapsed 38 members (1 May 2025)

Presidents report.

Allen referenced.

. Anzac Day Sydney march attendance was low this year . More veterans are marching with families in the regions.

. Terry advised the situation was the same in Brisbane.

. Allen has received confirmation from BC 131 Battery that they will assist with the Photo Album Project appointing 2 personnel for liaison. Parameters will need to be established.

Public Officer Report.

Gordon is currently in Europe therefore no report.

. Webmaster Update.

Robert advised Facebook members are 519. Posting is on the increase with a few repeat posters. Some posts are not relevant to our site.

. One poster was counselled to restrict post to relevant material or post will be deleted.

Health Report:

. No new issues have come to light over the period.

. Allen noted that we have received 2 vale notices, and it is unfortunate that we do not have earlier advice regarding these situations.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

. Terry advised that the Edinburgh Tattoo will be in Brisbane on 12/14 February 2026. He also confirmed the Reunion change of date to 20/21/22 June 2025.

. A discussion was held on current and proposed drone varieties and their profusion on the modern battlefield.

. Terry also advised that Lt Col Alexandra McDonald would be the next OC arriving at the unit toward the end of this year.

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 June, 2025 at 1100hrs

Venue: It will be ZOOM meeting only.



. Birthdays in the Battery...June –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	Geoffrey David Sullivan	3798292	02 12 1970	03 05 1971	Melbourne, Vic 131
	" "		03 05 1971	20 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
3	Allan Maclean Capt.	32203	24 05 1967	28 06 1967	RAEME † 24.06.2013
5	Peter Leonard Dealy L/Bdr	3411983	18 02 1968	21 02 1969	
5	James Douglas Lockhart T/Bdr	6709144	03 06 1969	21 02 1970	† 12.04.2014
5	Vito Angelo Ciccolella	2791669	16 12 1969	17 12 1970	
6	John Paul l'Anson	2787424	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	† 18.01.2023
7	Bruce David Irvine L/Bdr	2783695	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
8	Edwin Alfred Field Sgt.	242577	22 04 1966	31 07 1966	RAEME † 20.07.1996
10	Darryl Raymond Jenkins Bdr	46634	N/a	N/a	131 & 16 AD † 01.01.2024
	Keith Edward White	2783029	17 04 1967	13 12 1967	Belmore, NSW AACC
12	Ian Robert Amos L/Bdr	2785676	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
12	Lawerence Reginald Sawyer	3787393	04 05 1966	03 03 1967	
13	John Joseph McNeill	18814	16 04 1968	14 05 1969	† 14.11.2020
14	Paul Buss	2781443	22 04 1966	28 04 1967	† 28.09.2011
15	Karl Heinz Doehermann Sgt.	38119	{20 05 1966	29 04 1967	† 10.08.2009
	" "		{28 01 1970	27 08 1970	
15	Edwards John Webb T/Bdr	29964	27 01 1970	21 01 1971	Braidwood, NSW
16	Ralph William Pearce	214806	22 04 1966	30 04 1967	† 20.03.2022
18	Roger John Whittaker	2184592	19 08 1970	05 08 1971	† 01.12.2008
20	JOHN CHILTON	215855	09 12 1968	03 12 1969	
23	William John Prenter WO1	64258	22 04 1966	07 06 1967	RAEME † 01.10.1997
	" "		20 08 1970	09 06 1971	4 Fd Regt
25	Paul Anthony Butcher Bdr	3411454	01 04 1969	25 03 1970	
26	Lindsay Maxwell Mead T/Bdr	3790714	27 03 1968	26 04 1968	Benalla, Vic

26	Gerard John Carroll	2781311	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
28	Barry John Collins	2793213	20 08 1970	20 08 1970	131
	" "		20 08 1970	07 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
	" "		08 03 1971	09 06 1971	12 Fd Regt.
29	Neil Fawcett-Smith Sgt	17732	12.04.1967	12.03.1968	131/ROAAC † 02.02.1991
	" "		08.07.1970	08.07.1971	2nd Ord Dep

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

Ed – 4 blokes not highlighted is not too bad, but NOT good. Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

. Locator Profiles – we've received **181. Ed** – Maybe we need to draw in a deep one so as to hold our breathes for a while longer.

. Located...

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

Vale

Peter Meaney - forwarded the following information with regards **Leslie Paul Smith-Lester's** passing...



Bull Family Funerals

21 Apr · 🌐

FUNERAL NOTICE:

Smith-Lester: Leslie Paul "Paul"

Passed away suddenly at St Andrews Hospital Toowoomba on the 4th of April 2025 aged 75 years.

Loving Husband to Irene. Loving Father & Father-in-Law to Peta & Tyson, Kelly & Dan, Raegan & Geoffrey. Loving Poppy Paul to Scott, Noop, Tom, Tayla, Ruby, Dylan, Hillary, Kade, Jordan and Jett.

Loving Great Grandfather to Mason, Isabelle, Daisy and Olive.

Relatives and Friends are respectfully invited to attend a Funeral Service to celebrate Paul's life to be held at the Yelarbon Community Hall Park Yelarbon, on Monday (Apr 28th) commencing at 11.00am. A private cremation will follow this service.

Livestreaming will be available please use this link to view this service.

<https://evt.live/service-leslie-paul-smith-lester-known-as-paul>

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Mark R. Bull

BULL FAMILY FUNERALS

"Proudly Locally Owned & Operated"

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Goondiwindi 4671.4653

Member NFDA

The following link will allow you to stream the service.

Paul's brother mentions Paul serving with 131 in South Vietnam and the RSL representative quotes Paul's Regimental Number exactly.

<https://evt.live/service-leslie-paul-smith-lester-known-as-paul>



Name: Smith-Lester, Leslie Paul

**Service No: 1201202 Rank: Gunner
Driver - Survey**

SVN In: 23 09 1968 SVN Out: 24 09 1969

DoB: 03 08 1949

DoD: 04 04 2025

Lest We Forget



Brian David Auld - "RIP Gunner Ubique."

Bill Taggart (1st/83rd USA Artillery) - "Paul, please convey the condolences of the 1/83rd to Leslie's family, Lest We Forget.
Bill"

John Lochore - Hi Kevin, copy Dicko,
Sad to read of the death of Paul Smith-Lester. He was always cheerful, as I recall.
This picture of the mail being issued catches him in a typical pose – even though his face is in shadow.
If you think it appropriate, you're welcome to pass this on to his family.
Best wishes,
John."

**Mick Quinlan, Jim Merchant (back),
Paul Smith-Lester - issuing the mail**



Kevin Browning - "Hi Paul,
Certainly sad news about Paul Smith-Lester. He arrived in Vietnam a week after me and we left on the same plane a year later. When we arrived in Sydney he headed off to Queensland. The next time I saw him was at the Welcome Home Parade in 1987, not at the march but at the School of Artillery gathering afterwards. He was driving for Cobb & Co buses and dropped in to say hello but had to leave to continue his trip.
He was always known a Smithy-Lester to us and was the typical Queensland country boy. As John Lochore has already mentioned he was a driver in the Detachment. He was part of the Survey Section, driver for the Section Commander but was always out with us when the move was by road. Although part of the Section he wasn't accommodated with us, there were sixteen beds and he was the seventeenth member. He was used as a driver for the Q store as well.
Smithy-Lester was well liked by all of us and had the typical country boy personality and always a smile on his face. Only last Anzac Day in Sydney we spoke of him so it shows he had a big effect on us. Have attached a couple of photos but all I have him with a vehicle so no real close up.
His passing is a sad loss, but no doubt he is smiling down on us.
Regards
Kevin."

Photos:

My slide (at right) was taken in Saigon when the Section did a tactical inspection of the place (Swan in other words)



Graeme Owen's photos (3 of them) - I think the LT is Paul Tys who was the Radar Sect Comd. They were probably assisting with a Civil Affairs visit. Have also provided a cropped portion from that photo.





At left - is another from **Russ Jackson**. **Smithy-Lester** is on high alert sitting on the bonnet. **John Henshaw** in back of vehicle. **Jock Gunn** with rifle in other vehicle.



Right - is one **Russ Jackson** sent to me. **Smithy-Lester** is still smiling.

Graham Williams - "Hi Dicko,
Dug out a couple of photos for you. So sad to learn about his passing. I always knew him as Paul.

The first photo taken late July 69 after the rugby league grudge match between the Detachment and 1 Field H.Q. Bty who cheated with ring-ins from 101 and 105 Bty.
Back Row - **The late "Tiny" Little, The late Mick Aurisch, Graeme Owen, Ken Halligan, Graeme "Red" Salter, Peter Bremner, David Dodd.**
Middle row - **"TC" White, George Clark**
Front row - **Robert Ramsay, Ralph Mitchell, Paul Smith Lester and myself.**
Graeme Owen was a devil for punishment backing up in the AFL game played not long after.



The second photo (at left) is one of **Graeme Owens'** photos. **Paul Smith Lester in Flak jacket**, the late **Ray known as Mick Aurisch** back to camera closest and possibly the Louie is **Paul Tys**. Both vehicles had sallied forth without a jack.
Cheers,
Graham."

Jeff Schafer - "Hi Paul,
 Sorry to hear about Paul's demise. He was always "Smithy" or "Smithy-Lester" and a Land Rover driver for the survey section at Nui Dat.
 His name often came up at our later reunions as having been a bit of a larrikin with many exploits and adventures, none of which I can vouch for!
 I ran into "Paul" as he was then known at the Grand Hotel in Mildura in about 1980. He was driving Greyhound buses on return trips between Wagga and Mildura.
 He was a really friendly guy.
 The photo shows "Smithy" driving us to Saigon in 1969.
 Jeff Schafer.'



Vale

Peter Meaney supplied the following information with regards to **Terence William McManis's** passing...

Terence William Mcmanis	
BIRTH	1950
DEATH	20 Dec 2024 (aged 73–74)
BURIAL	<u>Centennial Park Cemetery</u> Pasadena, Mitcham City, South Australia, Australia Show Map
PLOT	RSL/Wall 125/C011
MEMORIAL ID	282229714 · View Source



Name: McManis, Terrence William

Service No: 44277 Rank: Lance Bombardier

SVN In: 20 05 1970 SVN Out: 09 10 1970

DoB: 18 02 1950 DoD: 20 12 2024

Lest We Forget



Bill Taggart (1st/8rd Artillery) - "Paul, I am at a loss for words on how to feel about this rash of bad news about your group. I know our collective ages means we will be seeing more such sad news so, once again, please convey the condolences of the 1/83rd to Terrence's family. Lest We Forget.
 Brothers forever!!
 Bill."

Pater Ravelje - I just read this on the **131 Div loc oldies Group**...from **Terry Erbs**. 30th May 2025

"Vale 1734352 **Neville Angus Smith**, a National Serviceman, who served with Det 131 Div Loc Bty in Vietnam 1969.

"Neville has not been well for a number of years which meant that he was put into care. In the last 3 weeks his condition deteriorated and he passed away this morning, 27 May. He will be sadly missed. He was a great mate with a wicked sense of humour. " R.I.P. Neville."



...Another notice...

Jim Morrison - "Hi John,

Neville's son has contacted me about his dad, Neville

1734352 Neville Angus Smith was a National Serviceman from 1 May 68 to 1970. That info was extracted from his paybook. He served with 131 Div Loc Bty in Vietnam circa 1969. We have no further information of his military service. His paybook was all that was found.

The family is very grateful for your support. They have authorised me to ask if you will pass on the following information to his fellow veterans from 131.

"Neville has not been well for a number of years which meant that he was put into care. In the last 3 weeks his condition deteriorated and he passed away this morning, 27 May. He will be sadly missed."

Thank you from me. He was a great mate with a wicked sense of humour.

Regards

Jim Morrison."

,,,continuing...

Russ Hamsey - "Peter (Bruce) and Terry (Erbs):

MAJ John Parkinson, 2IC 20 Regt, RAA was contacted by Jim Morrison, a mate of Neville Smith. Neville was a Vietnam Veteran with 131 Bty and his family wanted to pass on information of Neville's death on 27 May. Their wish is that the news of Neville's passing be passed to his old mates.

Could we get the word out via the usual means please? I suggest we could use the text provided by Neville's son:

" 1734352 Neville Angus Smith was a National Serviceman from 1 May 68 to 1970. That info was extracted from his paybook. He served with 131 Div Loc Bty in Vietnam circa 1969. We have no further information of his military service. His paybook was all that was found.

"Neville has not been well for a number of years which meant that he was put into care. In the last 3 weeks his condition deteriorated and he passed away this morning, 27 May. He will be sadly missed. He was a great mate with a wicked sense of humour. "

Regards,

Russ Hamsey, Secretary, LSTAA'

Peter Meaney - "Hello Paul,

Photo is of Neville Smith (on the right) and myself taken before Anzac Day march in Townsville 25 April 2018.

I first met Neville at the School of Artillery, in 1968, where we were both "enrolled" in the Signals Course along with Laurie Farr(RIP) and others. Spent time together in SVN, and RTA'd on same flight on 25 March 1970. We re-connected nearly 40 years later (June 2009) at Coffs Harbour reunion.

"Nevsy" as he was known to his family, was a great person , a gifted sportsman, who enjoyed a laugh and an "occasional" punt.

Rest easy Smithy.

Peter."





Name: Smith, Neville Angus

Service No: 1734352 Rank: Act. Lance Bombardier

SVN In: 02 07 1969 SVN Out: 25 05 1970

DoB: 01 02 1946 DoD: 27 05 2025

Lest We Forget



Locator Profile

Surname: Smith **Given Names:** Neville Angus **Nickname:** Nevsy **DoB:** 01.02.46 **State of Origin:** Qld (North)

What did you do before the army: Secondary education at All Souls Boarding School from 1960 til '65 for 6 years along with 300 other boys in Charters Towers. I attended James Cook University in Townsville for the next 2 years only to discover that I should have been a soldier – just kidding! Originally in the 4th Intake of Nashos, I ended up deferring till Intake 12. My dreams of being a graduate were shattered when I discovered I was just too bloody dumb, so on 30th of April 1968 it was a matter of “I’m in the Army now!”

My first major achievement was the survival of the train trip from Townsville to Brisbane with 100’s of other Nashos who were intent on destroying the only train Queensland owned.

Army service dates from: 17.04.68 **to** 16.04.70 **Regt No:** 1734352

If National service, then Intake: 12th

If served in SVN, then dates: from 01.07.69 **to** 25.03.70

Battery/s Activity/s (Bty/s served in, Sections of Bty/s worked in, locations, dates etc): Basic training in Singleton...nobody told us lads from up north that the only water available in Singleton was when the snow and ice melted!!!

From there it was to North Head. I have 2 notable memories of North Head - 2 months before leaving home I had become besotted by a young lady in Townsville named Carol, and unbeknown to me early on that the RSM at North Head was a big gruff soldier named Don Donkin, and he was the uncle or cousin of Carol!! Unfortunately, Don had a sense of humour not displayed openly. On one occasion we were on parade, some several hundred of us, and Don, who was in charge of the charade, screamed out at the soldier who was in the 2nd row of a certain platoon, some hundred metres away, to “fall out” and bring his chewing gum with him. I spent many hours in kitchens, toilets etc appeasing him on behalf of Carol’s family. To this day, he proclaims his innocence of any “set up”

The other was a recollection of my “miracle in Redfern”. L J Farr and I returning from a race meeting at Warwick Farm needed an urgent pit stop, and the next train stop was Redfern. I tore up the stairs and across the street to the nearest pub, my wallet dropped onto the floor without me knowing until we were back in the barracks. Can you believe a little old man found it and rang the barracks and held it for me until the next weekend to collect? I did not see anyone resembling a sober human being in that pub.

Holsworthy was our next base. Being in the radio shed to keep them charged etc was my duty. That’s when I went to the C.O. to please transport me to SVN.

LJ Farr and I decided we needed wheels if Holsworthy was indeed to be our resting place for some 18 months. One Saturday Laurie found Liverpool’s most disreputable car dealer and purchased for \$100.00 (\$50 each) a “brand-new” bomb of a Holden. It went, but not well. Next day, golf clubs in the back and off to the golf club which is on the northern headland just past Bondi beach. Game’s over, we head for the car only to discover the keys still in the ignition, a brick thru the triangular glass side window and we were on our way. That Holden ended breaking down in Middle Head, so, we left it there to collect the next weekend. When we arrived back the car was sitting on 4 bricks and completely stripped. I’m sure the only reason we were never called by the local police is because we were in SVN before much longer.

Randwick racecourse was the scene of many a battle but we loved the big smoke. A horse called Winfreux was running one Saturday and Laurie and I had decided the horse was unbeatable. We unloaded every last cent on this nag and won by half an inch after 3 photo finish prints were deliberated over. God knows how we would have got back to Holsworthy. We had uncovered some very desirable accommodation on Broadway for only a dollar. Pay up front please fellas...in those heady days.

My Holsworthy nightmare was, when after the usual hectic weekend, I was awoken by a cleaner on the train in the Lidcombe train yards. Had to bolt up the tracks, get on the next to Liverpool and be on parade by 8.30am. Didn’t even manage to go close, so that indiscretion cost me more dreadful nights wandering the perimeter “on guard duty”.

That may have been about the time the C.O. decided that the only hope for me was a holiday in SVN.

Who were you in the service with: The guys I served with are in no small way the reasons behind my insecurity and other problems - my sincere thanks to those I can remember and they are - Laurie Farr, Dennis {Tom Piper} Malloy, Peter Meaney, Gary Lovell, David Dodds, Peter Ravelje, Grant Perrins, Peter Bremner, Don Chalmers, Ron Boaler (still lives here in Townsville), Bill Laughlin, Jim Lockhart and Geoff price.

Battery Section - evidently, we were Artillery Intelligence - forward observers. What an outstanding title - when in SVN my rank was Bombardier, but when I got home the C.O. told me that "we had too many of them, so we took a stripe back". I still have my certificate of discharge which confirms my posting as a signaller. I also have my paybook - \$65.00 per fortnight when we started. Not much more when we finished. This paybook is without doubt the most confusing reading. No offense to gunner Ravelje, but he seems to have a lot of signatures in mine!! When my career finished, I notice the total sum was \$2151.78 at the time for me a king's ransom.

Don Chalmers and I arrived together in Nui Dat, say on a Monday and by the Thursday we were in the lead APC heading out to our 1st Support Base at the time all the practical jokers must have been in camp 'cos we were told to stand fully armed with an SLR at the ready as we left the Dat. All I know is that by the time a kilometre had gone we had stained dacks.

I will always remember Don for his bagpipes. He would play on the small pipe section at the bottom of the bagpipes and quite often, thank Christ he didn't bring the whole kit 'n caboodle!! I seemed to spend most of my time at the various Support Bases, but I cannot recall many, if any of their names...other than the Horseshoe.

Last Rank: Act L/Bdr

What did you do after the army: Upon discharge, I began work in the family sports store - We still have the store.

Anything else of interest: Carol and I married on 30/4/71 and celebrated 40 years a few months ago. Our son, Ben, now runs the store - he has an 18-month-old daughter and our daughter Kelly presented us with our 2nd granddaughter last week. I am obviously a nomadic tragic, having lived in just 2 houses in 64 years. Carol and I are attending Coffs again this year...looking forward to being able to recognize a few familiar faces

City I live in now: Townsville



That's my paybook photo on the left and then a day at the races on the right.

May They ALL Rest in Peace and Never Be Forgotten.



Vales and Locator Profiles...

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

Let's keep a memory alive.



The Vale section in *Eyes & Ears*, can at times be very scant of personal and service details, yes, there is the DVA Nominal Roll which contains tour dates, but supplies nothing for those who did not serve overseas, and contains no personal details.

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

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

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



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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